

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK



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Welcome



So I was going to tell you about that one, defining moment when the clouds parted, angels chorused, and I realised exactly how special PS3 was going to be. Pushing through the astonishingly believable crowd in Assassin's Creed? That grin as I tore sideways through a corner in the radiantly pretty Ridge Racer 7? The sheer mayhem of Resistance's 40-player online tear ups?

But it's impossible. The days when a console was dependent on a single game or bankable star are gone. What matters now is having a vast catalogue of big-hitters and boundary-pushers. It's also about the features – integrated online, hi-def movie playback and support for every digital device this side of a microwave – that make PS3 less a games console, and more the answer to all your lustiest digital dreams.

Our debut issue is devoted almost entirely to PS3. We've asked Sony the tough questions – where's rumble gone? Will they hit the UK's March launch window? – and interviewed key developers like Metal Gear's Hideo Kojima and Gran Turismo's Kazunori Yamauchi, whose job it will be to deliver on the PS3's almost daunting potential.

From 10 January we go monthly, with news, reviews and all sorts of tasty exclusives across all three PlayStation formats. Save us a mince pie and we'll see you again in 2007.

Tim Clark Editor

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COVER FEATURE



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GET READY FOR LAUNCH

Want to know absolutely everything about the new machine? Start here.

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Expert opinion on every PS3, PSP • PS2 game The latest PlayStation news direct from Sony **Unrivalled behind-the-scenes access** In-depth coverage of the games you want to play **Features you won't find anywhere else** More pages, more games, more PlayStation than any other magazine.

Next issue on sale 10 January



featurePS3
Get ready for launch

Get ready for launch

The next-generation of PlayStation gaming starts **here**



"Switch on PS3 and it
sounds like God's own
orchestra tuning up" **Page 12**

featurePS3

Get ready for launch



Launch UK March / Japan 11 Nov / US 17 Nov

60GB machine price £425 / \$599

US launch games 21

UK launch games 25-30

How exciting Very

Advice Pre-order now

Right now, gamers from Tokyo to Texas are ripping the packaging off shiny new PS3s. That stings a little, given that the UK has to sit tight until March. Perhaps it even stings enough to make you toy with buying another console, like some kind of Milky Way-style stopgap. But the truth is, PS3 isn't like other games machines. Sony's uberbox does 'most powerful games machine on the planet' without breaking a sweat, but it's also the most affordable way to get into hi-def movies and your online gateway to a world of video, music, chat and loads more. Everything's revealed over the following 18 pages. And with us to keep you company, those four months are going to fly by. On with the show...

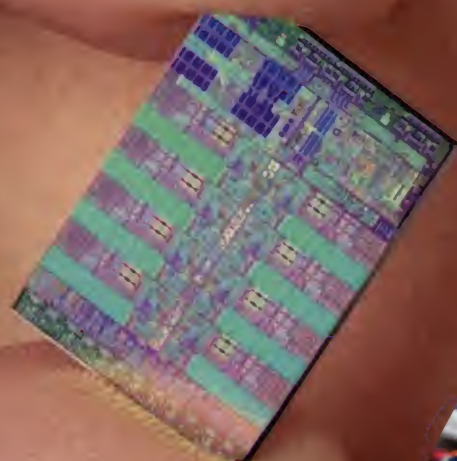


featurePS3

Get ready for launch

Why PS3 rocks

Seven reasons why you'd be mad not to get one



Power

Xbox 360 is a PC in a non-threatening box. PS3, meanwhile, is bursting with custom silicon that enables it to handle hi-def audio and video better than any other console. Even the best-looking launch games are a teaser: in the second and third waves, when developers really start to make the chips sing, the PS3 difference will be undeniable.



Hi-def

Crisp and clear like a November morning in Antarctica, a PS3 hooked up to an HDTV will let you pick out the wingnuts on a speeding Testarossa. The visuals can be displayed at the near-blasphemously pretty 1080p hi-def standard. Ignore the numbers, though. This matters: once you've played Ridge Racer 7, your brain won't let you go back.



Blu-ray


Fact: Blu-ray players are currently selling for close to a grand. PS3 comes with one as standard. Ignore all the 'format war' nonsense: even if every major film studio walked away (they won't) the extra storage (up to 50GB) is essential for PS3's data-hungry games. Blu-ray isn't an add-on, it's a vital part of PS3.




It's PlayStation

So everyone's going to support it. Virtually every major third-party series is appearing on PS3, many of them exclusively. Commercial ties with the likes of Apple and Warner Bros – Sony's Blu-ray partners – mean plenty of non-game content, too. And that's before you get to the vast back catalogue of PS1 and PS2 games or the support of Sony's music and movie divisions.

Motion control

Sony wants to make gaming more intuitive for everyone, and tilting joypad control is one of the most exciting ways of doing it. Every developer is bursting with ideas about how to use the technology – from roughing up enemies to tearing around on a dragon. And serial innovator Hideo 'Metal Gear' Kojima hasn't even shown his stuff yet. Before long, ducking a punch with a twist of the pad will be as instinctive as pressing  to accelerate.

Great games

Massive exclusives, brand new ideas, the arrival of episodic gaming, the biggest, most diverse range on any console... You knew this one, right? 

Future proof

The Network will provide a world class online entertainment service – piping games, music and movies direct to your PS3. What's more, it'll feed your PS3 with regular firmware upgrades that will boost performance and keep your machine up to speed. Sony expects the next-gen to last ten years because they're building PS3 with the power to last.

What does it all do?

Know the hardware inside out

The Cell processor



What is it? The Cell chip is essentially PS3's brain. It comprises seven Synergistic Processing Elements, each of which can be assigned to a specific task by the developer. For instance, one could handle character animation, while another governs realistic projectile movement, a third covers enemy AI and so on. In *Heavenly Sword*, the developer has dedicated an entire SPE to modelling lead character Nariko's flowing hair. Because the individual processors only need to concentrate on one thing – instead of switching between tasks – they are more efficient than one gigantic processor. One of the SPEs is reserved for maintaining the operating system's security, while another needs to collect all the results and display them on-screen.

The RSX 'Reality Synthesizer'



What is it? A graphics processing unit which – according to developers Nvidia – contains more transistors than PS2, Xbox and GameCube combined, and has more visual poke than a pair of GeForce 6800 video cards. It's been clocked at 1.8 trillion FLOPS, which is a huge number for anyone who understands what that actually means. (Floating Point Operations Per Second – Ed). The result is the most realistic graphics you've ever seen, with support for 'full HD' 1080p resolution. It also means that when Sony gets around to releasing *The Getaway* on PS3, London will be rendered so perfectly that Babs Windsor will think she's looking through a window.

20GB V 60GB versions

What's up? PS3 will hit the shops in two different flavours: a model with a 60GB hard drive and a full complement of ports, and a trimmed-down model with a 20GB drive, no flash card readers and no built-in WiFi. However, contrary to early reports, both versions will have HDMI outputs. The two versions will retail for \$600 and \$500 in the USA, and – after a price-slash – the cheaper model will sell for around £225 in Japan, with no set price for the deluxe version. Meanwhile, back here in Blighty the 60GB will set you back £425, while the junior model has no confirmed price. Our advice? Go large.

PS3

Top Features

- State of the art graphics
- Broadband ready
- Blu-ray media player
- Up to 7 pads over Bluetooth
- Built-in hard drive

PS3: no holes barred

Slots, sockets and other sexy stuff

Casing

Shiny enough for your 1900-in. and even a slightly transparent, PS3's pristine casing suggests Ark Of The Covenant levels of power. Probably best rig up some kind of tripwire to discourage jammy-fingered spouses/siblings from going near it, because it attracts dirt like a Hoover.

Digital Out

The same as the PS2's digital out – this socket outputs digital audio, including Dolby Digital and DTS sound. It won't carry Dolby True HD sound, though – you'll need to use the HDMI for that.

Power

Unlike the PS2, the PS3 uses the slightly meatier IEC power lead – commonly known as the 'kettle lead', because they're what you usually use on kettles. So spares are cheap.

HDMI (hi-def connection)

HDMI leads carry digital video and audio, so you need one to get the absolute best out of your PS3 and that gigantic HD telly you'll be buying. PS3 uses version 1.3 of the format, which means you'll also be able to get True HD sound via this socket. Bad news – you won't get an HDMI lead in the box.

Ethernet (network)

PS3 comes with an RJ45 lead, enabling you to hook up to the net via a standard broadband socket. If you've got a wireless router you can use the 60GB PS3's built-in WiFi to connect through the air. (The air!) Bonus fact: our network cable has a tiny rubber hat to protect those oh-so-snappable tabs. Nice.

AV Multi Out (audio/video)

You'll recognise this from PS2 – you can plug in several different types of lead. They are, in ascending order of quality: composite (which comes in the box), S-Video, RGB Scart and HD-ready component.

Hard drive

20GB or 60GB, depending on your model. Use it to save photos, ripped CDs and downloads from the PlayStation Store. Also helps speed up loading times, and you can upgrade to even bigger drives.

Disc drive

Your PS3 will play all sorts of discs, from DVDs to Blu-ray. Unlike the PS2, there's no disc tray – you simply push discs into the slot – like a fancy car stereo. There won't be any confusion, though – a device inside the PS3 stops you pushing another disc in if one's already in the drive, and pushing the 'Eject' button while the machine's empty prompts it to emit an authoritative 'beep'.

USB ports

Four of them. That means you can plug in a MP3 player, a camera and a USB memory stick at the same time. Or a mouse and keyboard. Or charge up four joypads at once. Buying Multitaps is so last-gen.

Memory card slots

From left to right, the 60GB PS3 has Compact Flash, SD/Mini SD, and Memory Stick Pro Duo slots. It's not compatible with PS2 memory cards which is annoying. You'll need a USB adaptor to transfer those (see p.21)...

Eject

Spits discs out – or makes a shrill beeping noise if you press it while there's no disc in the drive. Much like R2-D2.

Power switch

This is touch-sensitive, although there's also a proper PS2-style power switch on the back. Don't want to get fingerprints on it? Switch the machine on with the joypad's new central 'PS' button.

Let there be lights

PS3 keeps you updated on its status with coloured LEDs

Red
System on standby

Green
System on: no disc

Green flashing
Going into standby

Green and blue
Reading disc

Blue flashing
Ejecting disc



Blue and green
System in use

What's...in the box?

- 1 x Sixaxis controller
- Power cord
- Ethernet cable
- Composite AV cable
- USB mini-cable

featurePS3

Get ready for launch

Analogue sticks

There's more travel from rim-to-rim and less of a 'dead spot' in the centre. You'll be glad of the extra sensitivity when you're suavely leaning out from behind a corner instead of jumping out waving a massive 'shoot me' sign.

Lithium-ion battery

While Microsoft and Nintendo have gone for replaceable or rechargeable AA batteries in their wireless controllers, Sixaxis uses a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, said to be good for up to 30 hours of play per charge.

Wireless

Thanks to Bluetooth technology this is a no-strings-attached pad with a range of up to 20m. There's no being stuck next to the machine, or cables to trip over - we're free at last! You can also sit down, grab the controller and fire up a game remotely from the pad, without going near the console. Finally, Sony says PS3 can support up to seven controllers simultaneously.

Sixaxis

The DualShock is dead - long live PS3's new motion-sensing pad

First, the good news: PS3's redesigned joypad uses Sony's new Sixaxis sensing system to translate user motion into on-screen movement. In other words, you wave the pad around to control your in-game character (e.g. a plane in Warhawk, or a 60-stone dragon in Lair). Developers are already dreaming up more diverse uses (see 'Creative Freedom', opposite) although you can usually go back to the sticks if you prefer. Now the bad news. Sony claims the new motion feature prevents the inclusion of rumble feedback in the Sixaxis, so it won't vibrate in response to explosions, off-road detours and so on. Rumble is a big loss, but there are plenty of other new features to soften the blow...

'PS' button

This new button goes red when the pad's plugged in and charging, but stays off the rest of the time. Holding it down turns the console on from standby mode, while tapping it will sync PS3 and pad over Bluetooth. If you're already playing a game or watching a movie, pressing it for a couple of seconds brings up an option screen from which you can switch off the pad, quit back to the main menu or shut down completely. PS3: "What are you doing, Dave?"

Casing

Like PS3 itself, it's ever-so-slightly transparent - unlike the opaque DualShock 2. It's not that noticeable though, so you won't be staring at a mess of circuitry.

Empty space

The lack of rumble motors means that the Sixaxis is noticeably lighter than the DualShock - even with batteries onboard. At first it feels flimsy - cheap, even - but after an extended session on Lair you'll be grateful for the less hefty design.



SIXAXIS Top Features

- Motion-sensing function
- Improved stick sensitivity
- Classic PlayStation design
- Up to 20m wireless range
- Deeper trigger buttons

Player ID

There are four twinkling red LEDs that switch on to show which player you are in wireless mode. Hold the PS button to switch the machine on and they'll all flash together to show that the pad is connecting.

L2/R2 buttons

These have been reinvented as handgun-style triggers that angle inwards as they're pressed. There isn't much resistance behind them, either. It feels odd at first, but for prolonged massacres on Resistance it should save your index fingers. It's also much easier to gauge the amount of squeeze you're giving the triggers in comparison to the old, less-sensitive buttons.

USB slot

This is how you plug your Sixaxis into PS3 to charge it up. You can play while the pad's charging, but obviously it won't matter if you accidentally pull the lead out.



How motion control works

Dragon-flying game, *Lair*, fully exploits the tilt action



You can look

Tilt the Sixaxis to look around when your dragon is on the deck. Imagine the pad's front panel is a camera lens – by tipping it up, down, left and right, your view of the world changes.

You can steer

Your grip on the Sixaxis mirrors the way you would hold the beast's reins. By pulling and twisting the pad you can guide your flying lizard through the air.

You can savage

Encounter an enemy dragon while airborne and you can use the Sixaxis to attack. Get up close to your rival and jolt the pad forwards to ram into the creature. If you score a hit then you can shake the pad violently to tear it as well.

You can stomp

Land your dragon to go after fleeing foot soldiers and you can bang the pad down to make your steed stamp them into the ground. You can also breathe fire, or bite people, but grinding them underfoot is definitely the most fun.

Creative freedom

Motion control is being put to all kinds of use

Tony Hawk's Project 8 uses the tilt function for almost every aspect of the game. Steering, balancing and tricks can all be executed through motion. US sports games are also using the tech: **NHL 2K7** lets you ram opponents by jerking the Sixaxis towards them, while **Madden NFL 07** lets you wave the pad around to perform dukes (jinks) and other moves besides. **Tiger Woods PGA 07** takes a more peaceful approach: tilting the pad alters the ball's spin in the air.

Burnout 5 uses the pad to steer post-crash, guiding the flying wreck into the path of opponents. Both **Warhawk** and **Blazing Angels** use the pad to steer during flight, while **Assassin's Creed** will use careful tilting to balance the hooded assassin as he crosses narrow ledges and beams. Meanwhile, in **Metal Gear Solid 4**, Kojima plans to enable players to shake items out of enemy guards. Or break their necks.

Why's it called Sixaxis?

By sensing six types of motion the joypad gives you complete freedom of movement



Roll

Tilt pad left or right

Makes you turn in an arc if you're a plane or space craft or dragon. This move is essential for controlling motion in 3D space, i.e. flying.

Pitch

Tilt pad back and forth

Makes you dive or climb. Or look up and down. Again great for flying or for shooters that rely on you being able to react to the game world in full 3D.

Yaw

Turn pad left or right

Turn the sixaxis like a steering wheel to change direction if you're a car, change the way you face if you're a person, or spin if you're a plane.

X axis

Move pad forward or back in a straight line

Measures how fast you accelerate forward, or brake, or reverse, depending on how the game is set up.

Y axis

Move pad left or right in a straight line

Measures how fast you move left or right: good for strafing in a FPS, or sensing whether your car can hold that bend.

Z axis

Move pad up or down in a straight line

Measures your vertical speed. So it's how high you jump, or fast you stomp, or jet-pack around the place.

Facing This set of rotations [1-3] govern your orientation about three perpendicular axes [4-6]. In other words, this is how Sixaxis knows you want to change direction and how sharply you want to do it. Whether a game responds to all six inputs is up to the developers and how they want to exploit the joypad's abilities.

Velocity These movements [4-6] govern your motion in three perpendicular axes [X, Y, Z]. In other words, they control how fast you're moving in a particular direction. Combine this velocity information with the other three rotational or orientational inputs [1-3] and you have six degrees of freedom to move in 3D space.

Cross Media Bar

Exploring PlayStation 3's ultra-stylish interface

After experimenting with the Cross Media Bar – or XMB – on PSP, Sony has adopted an upgraded version of the system for PS3, slotting all the machine's options and browsers onto a central hub. As on PSP, the interface seems to change colour as the months go by: the backdrop we saw at Tokyo Game Show was a soothing blue, but our office PS3 wafts out a gentle sepia. The customisation options enable you to make it more personalised by setting one of your own snaps as the wallpaper. [Not your cat. It sends the wrong message.] Oh, and the noise when you switch PS3 on sounds like God's own orchestra tuning up.

USERS

This is where you create user profiles for saved games and online play. You can also upload an avatar (your signature picture) or pick one from the selection available – which, on our pre-release machine, were mostly multicoloured swirls. Parents can choose to create a 'Master Account', from which they can set restrictions on the kids' subsidiary accounts – preventing little Johnny from going on a PlayStation Store spending spree or watching Blu-ray filth.

PHOTO

Browse your digital snaps, either by plugging a camera into a USB port or slotting in a memory stick. Your pics can be viewed in 1080p, with the PS3 extending its graphical muscle to treat them like 3D objects. One slideshow option mimics them being thrown onto a wooden table, complete with handwritten captions.



SETTINGS

Customise everything from date and time settings to your (optional) mouse's scroll speed. You'll also want to select the correct resolution for your TV, so those HD visuals look spot on. Most interesting, though, is the System Update option: as on PSP, this will enable you to upgrade the firmware, introducing new features and functions.

MUSIC

Here are the CDs you've ripped and the tunes you've bought from the PlayStation Store. PS3 supports MP3, AAC and ATRAC formats. It also features a 3D visualizer that uses the RSX chip to generate images in time to your tunes. Lord knows what it will do with our Norwegian black metal playlist.

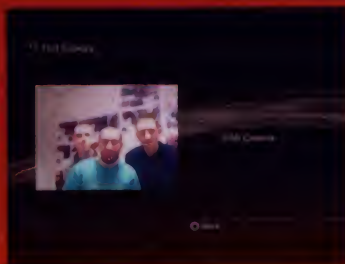
Let's see it in action

Delving deeper into the XMB's options



Dictionary type

A small detail, but a crucial one – PS3's predictive text input can be switched between American and British dictionaries.



Test camera

The PS3 has an HD-enabled camera on the way, but plug an existing EyeToy into the USB slot and it works just fine.



Button behaviour

As importers know, on Japanese PS2s the © button means 'enter' rather than 'back' – this option enables you to toggle the function.



Video output settings

Here you customise your PS3's visual output, selecting the leads, resolution size and signal type that best suits your television.

featurePS3

Get ready for launch

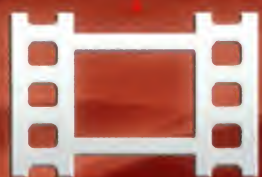
PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

PS3 and PSP are the Brangelina of consumer electronics: the perfect couple. Using ad-hoc WiFi, your PSP can access content on your PS3's hard drive, including streaming music and video. For now you'll need to be within normal wireless distance (about 20m) but the plan is to be able to log in from anywhere in the world. Also, the PS1 games which you'll be able to download from the PlayStation Store will initially only be playable on PSP. Transferring data – music, photos, video, Mossad watch-lists – between the two devices can be done using Memory Stick or USB.



MOVIES

PS3 supports all major movie disc formats, including BD-ROM, BD-R, BD-RE, DVD Video, DVD-VR, DVD+VR and AVCHD. No HD-DVD, of course. [Spit.] This is also where your other downloaded video content will live, complete with flashy moving thumbnails. You can even edit the thumbnails to loop your fave bit.



NETWORK

This contains Remote Play, internet Browser and PlayStation Store options. The browser lets you visit any site (including fancy web 2.0 stuff) and open up to six windows at once. Remote Play enables your PSP to tune into and use your PS3's content via WiFi.



GAMES

This is the motherlode – as on PSP, it's where you'll jump into your games – but also where you'll be able to access the games stored on your hard drive. It includes: Game Data Management, Memory Card Management (PS3/PS2), Save Data Management and PlayStation 3 game disc sub-menus.



FRIENDS

This includes three categories: Friends, Players Met (yes, you can block them) and Message Box. Matchmaking will be part of Sony's free online service, though individual developers are expected to provide more elaborate ranking systems. It's also where you first sign up for the PlayStation Network.



Sign up for the Network

To play online you need to create a PlayStation Network account. The Master account can limit the access given to Sub accounts.



Saved data utility

Game saves are stored here, each file stamped with a time, date and game icon so they can be easily organised and deleted.



Bluetooth device options

PS3's Bluetooth functions are managed here. This menu lets you search for and register wireless headsets, microphones, etc.



Internet browser control

This is where the Master account holder can set limits on what other users can see and do on the web. It's activated on browser start-up. ▶

The Network

With PS3, you're going to be online, all the time. This is why...

Let's not tiptoe around this: PS2's online service was a bit of a mess. After building the hardware, Sony left it to games developers to actually make it all work, without bothering to build an official front-end for the system. Result: confusion. That's not the case this time, the key difference is that the PS3 has been designed as a network machine from the ground up. The PlayStation Network will offer multiplayer gaming and – most importantly – basic services like web browsing, instant messaging, video chat and matchmaking for free, just like they are on a PC. But the fun won't stop at 40-player Resistance bloodbaths – there's much more to PS3 online than that. Here's what else to expect...

MUSIC

Tons of options here. Apart from being able to download hi-def videos of featured artists, you'll also be able to buy tunes from Sony artists in the PlayStation Store. Deals with other record labels are certain to follow. Then there's streaming music off sites like MySpace using the web browser, and don't forget the chance to buy extra SingStar tracks – hopefully enabling you to create that dream 'all Elton, all the time' playlist.



ONLINE GAMING

Games on PS3 will support up to 40 players online, plus player rankings and video, text, and voice chat. You can also download extra content like new cars, guns, characters, maps and – most excitingly, in the case of the new GTA – brand new episodes, exclusive to PS3.



DOWNLOADABLE GAMES

You can download original games like Flow direct from the PlayStation Store (see p16), currently priced at \$14.99 or under. Demos of full-fat PS3 games will also be available from launch in the UK. Sony doesn't plan to charge for demos initially, but admits that the situation might change in the future. Pre-emptively angry letters to the usual address.

VIDEO

Game and movie trailers will form a major part of the PlayStation Store offering. There's also talk of creating a Netflix-style service enabling you to download HD films which would then auto-delete after a few days.



THE NET

PS3's built-in browser can run six internet windows simultaneously (more may eventually be possible) and uses a Minority Report-style floaty interface to switch between them. There's no restriction on what sites you visit and you can even stream embedded music, although content can only be downloaded from the PlayStation Store. Windows-haters will also be glad to hear a version of the Linux OS is on the way, including office software, plus the Firefox browser and Thunderbird email.



EXTRA CONTENT

We're all going to become much more familiar with the idea of 'micro-transactions' – new content for games you already own, available online for a small fee. It's a thorny subject – nobody wants to see publishers holding back bonus cars, guns, costumes, or levels and then selling them later – but there's also the potential to improve a game's lifespan with a regular supply of new fun rather than two-year waits between sequels.

ONLINE CHAT

Although Sony hasn't shown the PS3 headset so far, it is on the way – and once it arrives you'll be able to chat to other PS3 owners via broadband for free. Even better, once you've got an HD EyeToy camera, crispy-sharp free video chat will be reality. At that point, all you have to worry about is

remembering to get dressed before answering.



Know the future now

What's coming next for PS3 Network

USER-CREATED CONTENT

Epic's Tim Sweeney (UT2007) has praised Sony's 'enlightened business model' and attitude to user-created content (mods). He believes modders will be able to create PS3 mods on their PCs and distribute them on the Network.

RECORDING

Sky recently started offering movies and sports via broadband, so it's not a great leap to imagine getting all kinds of TV content down your ethernet pipe and then recording it to your hard drive. Brilliantly, we can confirm that Sony is also working on a way for you to record your own gameplay footage lunacy and then upload it for the world, YouTube-style.



ONLINE SHOPPING

Obviously, you can use the built-in browser to blow the overdraft at the usual sites (Amazon, Play, Agent Provocateur) but PlayStation overlord Ken Kutaragi has also hinted at a richer shopping experience. Think some sort of virtual mall modelled in 3D. Now hide the plastic.



PlayStation Store

Packed with new games, tunes and trailers to download

The PlayStation Store is the new online shopping experience for PS3; the virtual place you go when you want new entertainment to fill up your PS3's fun-hungry hard drive. Thanks to Sony's industry contacts the Store should be well stocked with movie, music and video content, plus game downloads (see right), by UK launch time. According to Sony, you can browse through the Store to an individual game such as Gran Turismo. The screen will then show you what items are available from the game's virtual shelf. So you'll be able to buy items like a new car for \$2 (£1.05), new tracks (anywhere from 90p - £2.25), new tyres, or other items that affect gameplay, like engine oil or bucket seats.

01 Open for business

You can enter the Store using the Network icon on PS3's Cross Media Bar, which will make all content available, or via a game, accessing its specific items only.

02 Choose your items

Warhawk is the best example yet of the range you'll find in the Store. New levels weigh in at \$6.95 (£3.60), new vehicles at \$2.95 - \$3.95 (£1.55 - £2) and new weapons at \$1 (50p). Thankfully some items are given away free.

03 Pocket money

Parents stay in charge by setting up a master account that controls sub accounts. These can be topped up from the master wallet, giving the kids a weekly allowance to spend.



WARHAWK Store

Store Top

Warhawk
Publisher: SCEA
Release Date: March 2007
ESRB: Teen

Game Description
The long-awaited remake to the PlayStation®3 hit takes flight on the PlayStation®3. Experience the thrill of white-knuckle aerial combat with hundreds of enemy fighters, bone-crunching armored assaults and high-intensity infantry combat in a massive, all-out war - fought both on the ground and in the skies.

Category List
Category: Weapon (155)

WHAT'S NEW

Item	Release Date
Expanded Saho Upgrade	March 1
Chernovan Mobile AA	March 1
Pandora Jungle [34]	March 1
Eucadian APC	March 1
WV Rail-gun Upgrade	March 1
5000lb. Bunker Buster	March 1
GPS-Red Mercury Torpedo	March 1
Communications Drone	March 1
Command Radar Upgrade	March 1
Avalanche Repeater Upgrade	March 1

TOP10

Item	Price
Expanded Saho Upgrade	\$1.00
Eucadian Main Battle Tank	\$2.95
Chernovan Mountains [16]	FREE
And Wasteland [32]	\$8.95
Chernovan Ground Vehicle	\$2.95

Category List

WARHAWK Info, Chernovan Moun..., Eucadian Fields..., Avalanche Repeat..., Laser-Guided En..., Eucadian Ground..., Eucadian Heavy..., Warhawk Mk.4..., Expanded Saho

3 / 16

PLAYSTATION Store

Game, Music, Video

GRAN TURISMO 4

Category List
Category: Featured Items (12)

WHAT'S NEW

Item	Release Date
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5
Gran Turismo Sport	May 5

TOP10

Item	Price
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99
Gran Turismo Sport	\$19.99

Purchase Checkout

Eucadian Fields [24] (WARHAWK Item) SCEA \$ 6.95

Warhawk Mk.4 Upgrade (WARHAWK Item) SCEA \$ 2.95

Total Purchase Price \$ 9.90

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. will deduct the following amount from your master wallet balance.

VIEW CART **HISTORY** **ACCOUNT** **Kaz**

Wallet: \$75.00 Spending Limit: \$100.00

04 Repeat purchaser
Pop items in your basket and the bill racks up. Happily, you can delete items to clear your hard drive and still download 'em (up to five times) for free. You can also take items to a friend's house and still use 'em.

05 Cost of living
Prices are listed in cash not points. You pay from a PlayStation 'wallet' which is charged up with a credit card or a PlayStation gift card. Once paid for, the goods download onto your hard drive.

Downloadable games

You can beam down games in three different flavours

PS3 demos/content

You can expect every major game to have a downloadable demo available in the PlayStation Store. And, for now at least, they're free.



MotorStorm

Originally billed as a US launch title, but Sony is adopting an "it's ready when it's ready" approach. However, there will be a demo to download when PS3 launches in America on 17 November.



Formula One 06

Also confirmed to be a day one demo at US launch, even NASCAR-loving, Bud-swilling hillbillies would do well to take a look: the sunshine breaking through the trees is *astounding*.



Expansion packs

You can look forward to the regular release of extra content for your favourite games. Think new Call Of Duty 3 maps, fresh Warhawk online modes and... Oblivion horse armour?

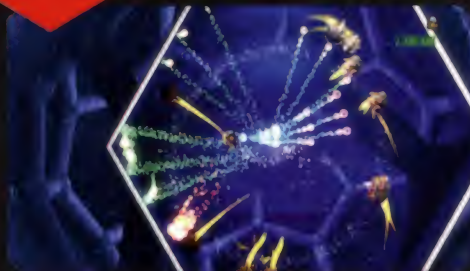


Game trailers

Hi-def trailers will be available to download for every significant game, and will potentially include 'Making Of...' documentaries, developer diaries and game show reports.

e-Distribution

Innovative, download-only games, often designed by tiny teams. Seven are available at launch in the US, where they cost \$14.99 or less.



Blast Factor

A fast, 2D shooter where you pilot a microscopic ship to fight off viruses. By shaking the Sixaxis pad you can generate waves in the fluid around you, which repels the attacking enemies.



Calling All Cars

Chaotic racer in which you hunt and capture criminals, before trying to ferry the crook back to the nick without being hijacked by other players. It's designed by David 'God Of War' Jaffe.



Ca\$h Carnage Chao\$ DLX

Gory Smash TV-style shooter that has players blasting endless waves of enemies in a twisted game show. Brilliantly, owners of the PSP version will be able to take on PS3 players.



Flow

It's like swimming in Brian Eno's head. A soothingly ambient but deep experience, you are an aquatic worm that needs food to evolve and swims using the motion-sensitive Sixaxis pad.

PS1 games

Sony aims to put the entire PS1 catalogue on the PlayStation Store. Once downloaded, you play them on PSP. The first confirmed titles are...



Twisted Metal

Cars and weapons go together like petrol and matches in this frantic, every-psycho-for-himself brawl. Simple controls and instant action make it well-suited to PSP play.



Resident Evil: Director's Cut

So many memories, all unpleasant: spiders the size of hatchbacks, zomboid dogs crashing through windows and utterly rotten voice acting. The dark love affair started here.



Syphon Filter

Too easily dismissed as an MGS rip-off, Syphon Filter had smart boss battles where you had to work out the weak spot or suffer. Gabe Logan ran like he'd crapped his pants though.



Tekken 2

The fighter that took the King Of Iron Fist Tournament overground, selling three million copies worldwide. Tekken 2 had better-than-arcade visuals and stacks of new modes.

HD Gaming

Hi-def is the only way to experience PS3's true majesty

How will high definition TVs and graphics change gaming?

Simple – it's going to get a lot prettier. Partly because PS3 is armed with more raw graphics power than any other games console, but also because it's capable of outputting these visuals at the highest HD picture standard: 1080p. Once you've seen a game running on a top HDTV, you'll never want to go back to a standard telly. The image is sharper, deeper and radiates colour. It's also easier on the eye, because the progressive display eliminates the flicker that previously gave you brain ache. Extra clarity means gameplay benefits, too. Like spotting a sniper lurking in the undergrowth, or seeing that signpost for a lethal hairpin as you hurtle by at 180mph.

Should I go LCD or plasma?

Tough call, and for most people it will come down to personal preference. LCD screens tend to be thinner and offer a brighter, sharper image than plasma. Plasma TVs boast deeper blacks (providing a richer colour contrast), bigger screen sizes and are better at handling fast motion, although there is a slight risk of 'burn in', which occurs when a static image (such as a health bar) remains as a faint after image. Still, recent advances on both formats have almost wiped out the differences, so it really comes down to the picture quality and features of each individual set. Our advice is to draw up a shortlist of TVs and make sure you audition them running genuine HD imagery.

Do I need a 1080p TV set?

Not necessarily. HDTV channels broadcast picture quality at 720p or 1080i (which Sky HD uses) – easily enough to make games look stunning. But some games, Blu-ray and HD video go up to 1080p. The number is the amount of lines displayed on-screen, while the 'p' or 'i' refers to whether the image is displayed progressively or interlaced. Progressive is more stable, because every line is drawn simultaneously (making it better for fast moving images) while an interlaced signal draws alternately, but can be more detailed because (in the case of 1080i) the number of lines is higher. 1080p therefore offers the best of both worlds – the highest number of lines plus the better signal type – which is why Sony trumpets it as 'True HD'. Only a few of the early games (e.g. Ridge Racer) offer 1080p, and, worse, 1080p TVs are relatively expensive. However, our development sources reckon that all games will offer 1080p within 18 months and that TV prices will plummet. Our view is that 1080p is worth investing in. If you're going to spend a fortune on a new TV that will last you for years, and want to see your games and Blu-ray movies at their best, then 1080p is worth the extra wallet pain.

How much do I need to spend?

The price of even entry level HDTVs will make most eyes water right now. So we've rounded up what we think are the five best sets currently available, with prices based on the best web offers at the time of writing.

HD GUIDE What to look for

- At least one HDMI input
- Built-in Freeview tuner
- High contrast ratio
- 1920x1080 resolution, if you want to run games in 1080p

Five of the best

HDTVs from 'entry level' to 'Lottery winner'



PANASONIC TX-26LXD60 £577

Type LCD Size 26 inch HDMI slots 2
HD picture supported 720p/1080i

At this size you're not really seeing all the benefit of that HD goodness, as part of the impact comes from the sheer scale of a big flat panel. Still, this represents the best of the budget market, with picture quality that rivals much more expensive sets.



TOSHIBA 32WLT68 £906

Type LCD Size 32 inch HDMI slots 3
HD picture supported 720p/1080i

Ideal if you haven't got an enormous room, and it's scalpel-sharp thanks to Tosh's proprietary Active Vision system, which scans the screen twice as often as a conventional LCD. Three HDMI sockets also means you're future-proofed.



OUR CHOICE
PlayStation.

SONY KDL-40W2000 £1,537

Type LCD Size 40 inch HDMI slots 2
HD picture supported 720p/1080i/1080p

No, we're not simply being loyal to the Sony mothership – this Bravia does the lot: full 1080p support and an unbeatable picture. It handles motion with contemptuous ease and delivers deep, edge-of-the-galaxy blacks. You have until March to save up.



SHARP AQUOS LC46XD1E £2,029

Type LCD Size 46 inch HDMI slots 2
HD picture supported 720p/1080i/1080p

Sharp is a major player in LCD-land. Its latest panels are generously sized and have full 1080p support. If you've got the cash and space it's always worth going bigger. Includes a built-in Freeview tuner, in the unlikely event you get bored of Call Of Duty 3.



PIONEER PDP-5000EX £5,370

Type Plasma Size 50 inch HDMI slots 2
HD picture supported 720p/1080i/1080p

Just won the lottery but don't like your family enough to share? Treat yourself to this beast instead. You get what you pay for: it's arguably the finest picture quality of any UK set. But be warned, it weighs a staggering 39.8kg. That's about seven stone or two Posh Spices. ▶

*Prices quoted represent best deals online at time of writing

Blu-ray

Why PS3's new disc format will change gaming

What's so great about Blu-ray discs? Basically, they're bigger. A lot bigger. And all that extra capacity is essential for storing space-guzzling, hi-def, 1080p-compatible Blu-ray movies (available now) and the rich game worlds we're anticipating from PS3. Whereas DVD players use a red laser to read data with a wavelength of about 650 nanometres, Blu-ray players use a blue-violet laser with a much shorter wavelength of about 405 nanometres. In practical terms, that means the laser can be focused with far greater precision – which is why the discs can hold so much more information.

But isn't it just making PS3 more expensive for people who don't care about films? Well, no. As Sony's Phil Harrison points out, modern games also need the space. "Resistance: Fall Of Man is up to 20-something gigabytes already," says Harrison. "And that's day one – think about four years from now. We'll be pushing the 50 gigabyte limit with dual-layer Blu-ray very quickly. So we absolutely need it as game designers and, in that regard, the consumer is getting the movie functionality effectively for free." Oh, go on then.



▲ The sheer capacity offered by Blu-ray discs enables developers to create bigger, more detailed worlds. Games like Gran Turismo HD are also able to run at the maximum hi-def resolution, 1080p.





▲ The first wave of Blu-ray films were released in October in the UK. Underworld: Evolution features Kate Beckinsale in glorious hi-def. The movie itself? Less glorious.

A basic
Blu-ray disc
stores **25GB**
of information

That's the same as:
23 hours of normal TV
9 hours of hi-def TV
3 DVD movies

Hi-def stand-off

How the rival disc formats square up

HD-DVD		BLU-RAY
While a standard DVD can hold 9GB of data, a dual-layer HD-DVD boasts an impressive-sounding 30GB of storage – enough to store nine hours of hi-def video images.	 Capacity	Blu-ray takes that 30GB and raises it by almost 70%, offering 50GB on a dual-layer disc. Plus, Sony is working on 100 and maybe even 200GB capacity versions... For PS3 that means a lot of game.
The manufacturing process is very similar to current DVD production, so factories don't have to be entirely refitted to start banging out HD-DVD discs. This makes the production process, and therefore the cost of the disc, cheaper.	 Cost	Blu-ray is new technology, and therefore inherently more expensive – although the cost will come down. But given that Blu-ray movies and PS3 games are priced competitively with their HD-DVD and Xbox 360 equivalents, there's no reason to lose sleep. Not that you were likely to.
Microsoft, Intel and Toshiba are the big names behind HD-DVD, mostly because of the price. A few film studios – New Line, Paramount, Universal, Warners – have also signed up to the format, although most of those are keeping their options open.	 Support	Blu-ray has the backing of Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, Dell and Philips. All but one of the major film studios has pledged support, so if you want to watch hi-def movies on PS3 as well as play games, there really is only one choice.
HD-DVD comes out fighting with its 'cheap as chips' move but is soon exposed as a one-trick pony operating on three legs. Lower capacity, short-term cost effectiveness and limited Hollywood support leave the wounded format battered and bruised.	 Verdict	Blu-ray absorbs the early knocks and comes out windmilling, landing shots with its massive 50GB storage and corporate backing. And it's saved the killer blow for last – it's the standard PS3 format. Who shouted 'fix'?

EXTRA SIXAXIS \$49.99 (£26.33*)

Brand loyalty aside, we always buy official pads – purely to prevent mates blaming crushing defeats on having to use 'the dodgy one'. That said, we could be tempted by third-party rumble pads, when they inevitably arrive.



PS3 REMOTE \$24.99 (£13.16)

Designed in keeping with most Sony remotes, the official PS3 version comes with all the buttons from the PS3 pad, plus the multi-coloured option buttons familiar from Sky+ and, erm, Ceefax.



PS3 extras

...bang goes the rest of the overdraft

With a shiny PS3 nestling in your bubble-wrap-stuffed backpack – and maybe some pepper spray in your pocket for 'emergencies' – all you'll want to do is hurry home to plug it in and forget your worries. But no; our wallets are in for yet more pummelling. Here, then, are the extra devices you might want to complete the PS3 experience...

HDMI CABLE £9.99+

Okay, theoretically not essential, but if you've already splashed out on a HDTV and a PS3, you'd be a special sort of crazy not to get one of these – it preserves the HD signal between HDTV and PS3. Prices start at around a tenner (verdict: totally fine) and climb quickly into crazy money territory.



HD USB CAMERA \$129.99 (£68.44*)

There's an official Sony camera on the way – no doubt it'll have been dubbed EyeToy HD by the time it arrives – but until then there's an emerging range of third-party HD webcams on the market. Of course, what you'd do with one before the release of PS3's video broadcasting software is anyone's guess...



BLU-RAY DVDs £17.99-£24.99

S.W.A.T.? Erk. Stealth? Hmm. Underworld: Evolution? Nnngh! Okay, so the first wave of Blu-ray DVDs – launched in the UK on 15 October – hasn't been up to much, but more than 100 titles have been confirmed for a pre-Christmas release. If anyone's feeling generous, we'll take House Of Flying Daggers and the collectors' edition Full Metal Jacket, ta.



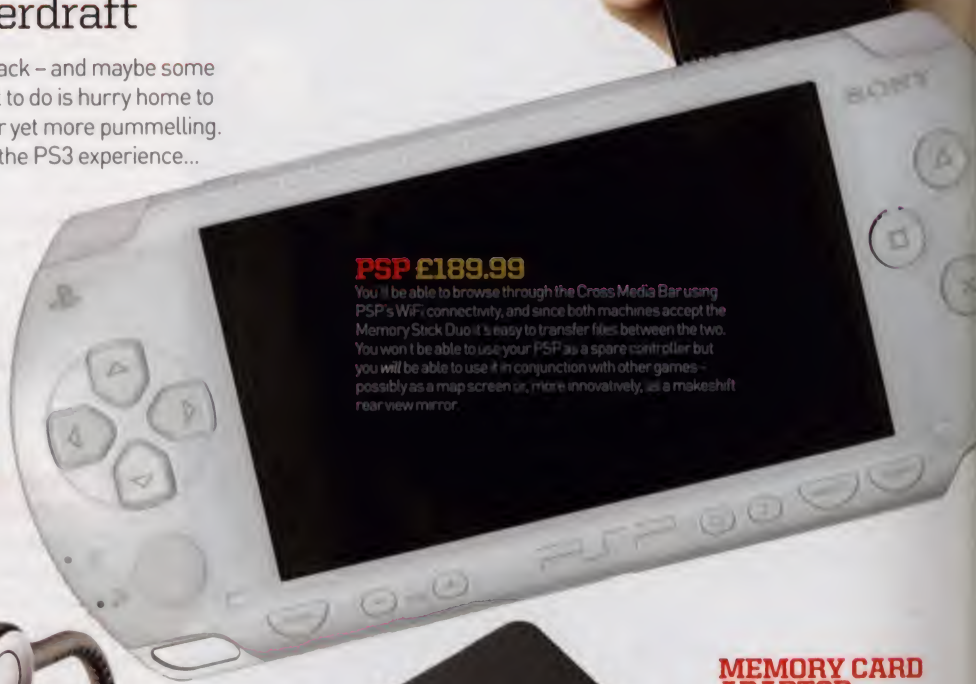
MEMORY CARDS £9.99+

The 60GB PS3 has slots for the three major types of flash memory cards to make transferring media to the machine easy and straightforward. Compact flash (widely used in digital cameras), SD and Mini SD (the latter designed for mobile phones) and Memory Stick Pro Duo (used in phones and, of course, the PSP) are supported – making sharing files between your PS3 and your other digital devices incredibly simple.



PSP £189.99

You'll be able to browse through the Cross Media Bar using PSP's Wi-Fi connectivity, and since both machines accept the Memory Stick Duo it's easy to transfer files between the two. You won't be able to use your PSP as a spare controller but you will be able to use it in conjunction with other games – possibly as a map screen or, more innovatively, as a makeshift rear view mirror.



MEMORY CARD ADAPTOR \$14.99 (£7.89*)

This plugs into your PS3's USB slot and enables you to transfer saved games across from your PS2 memory card – so you won't have to start from scratch with your backwards compatible games. Don't want to splash the cash? Then you should be able to download game saves from the internet and simply transfer them across via a memory stick.



PS3 FAQ

Your questions answered, before you even ask 'em

Should I import?

Sony maintains a hardline anti-import stance, and following a successful court ruling against one Honk Kong company, plans to use the "full scope of the law" to prevent overseas PS3s being sold in this country. That aside, there's other problems to consider – like customs charges and your now-useless warranty. Interestingly, though, PS3 games are region-free, meaning there's nothing to stop you picking up an obscure Japanese RPG or, better, a copy of Winning Eleven 11. Blu-ray movies, however, are definitely region

locked. The chances of you being able to import are slim, anyway. Unscrupulous Americans have been pre-ordering PS3s simply to sell them on eBay at crazy prices, making machines almost impossible to find. In Japan, queueing's more the done thing, so you might get one if you're prepared to hop on a plane and stand in line in a Shinjuku shopping mall for 18 hours.

How many PS3s will the UK get?

Sony won't say, and even the US is suffering a PS3 drought, with most

branches of EB and Gamestop – two of the most popular videogame outlets – receiving less than a dozen units each. Sony's original plan was to have six million units in the global market by March 2007, but now they say they haven't yet decided on the European allocation.

Do I need to pre-order?

Definitely. Problems producing a crucial blue diode have already delayed the European launch date of PS3, and whatever the stock allocation in March, demand is sure to outstrip supply. See our pre-order guide on page 82 for more.

Will I be able to play my old games on it?

Yes. In theory. Sony claims that any game that observes the PS2 and PS1's technical requirements checklist will work on PS3. However, as Sony boss Ken Kutaragi admits: "Either by accident or on purpose, there are a lot of games that don't follow the TRC."

Is it noisy?

No. In comparison to PS2 and Xbox – both of which emit a constant fan-hum – PS3 really is whisper-quiet. If it didn't have a little light on the front, you'd never know it was switched on.

Does it overheat?

Not as far as we can tell. Ours is often on for hours at a time, and hasn't given us any trouble. The vents around the top of the machine

do get warm – but as long as you don't leave it on all day, in a Perspex case, in a non-air-conditioned warehouse packed with 60,000 people – as Sony did at the Tokyo Game Show – it should be fine.

Will the price drop?

Like all consoles, PS3 will eventually drop in price. It's full of bespoke components which, at the moment, are expensive to produce. But they will get cheaper. The wholesale cost of Blu-ray drives is set to drop to £50-100 by late 2007, while some analysts predict that Sony will be able to produce cell processors for about £30 within three years. That said, we don't anticipate a price drop before December 2007, at the very earliest.

Will all games use the Sixaxis' tilt function?

Sony's head of Worldwide Studios, Phil Harrison, certainly thinks so: "I expect every game to use it in some way." Bold claim, maybe, but think about the DualShock rumble pad: some games just crowbarred a bit of vibration in every time you got hit, but innovators used it as an integral part of the sensory experience. Most games in the PS3 line-up have some sort of Sixaxis tilt support.

How do you avoid doing tilt stuff by accident?

We were worried about triggering tilt moves when we didn't mean to, but Criterion's Alex Ward offers an easy solution: the game uses a

Three-way specs

How the next-gen console contenders stack up

	Wii	Xbox 360 Premium	PS3 60GB
Price	£179	£279	£425
CPU	'Broadway' PowerPC	Custom 3.2GHz PowerPC with 3 Cores	Cell Broadband Engine
Graphics processor	'Hollywood' ATI GPU (243Mhz)	Custom ATI GPU (500Mhz)	Nvidia/Sony RSX (550Mhz)
Total memory	88MB	522MB	512MB
Hard drive	512MB internal flash memory	20GB	60GB
Optical drive	12cm Wii disc / 8cm Gamecube disc	DVD	Blu-ray
HD resolutions supported	None	720p/1080i (NB can also 'upscale' output to 1080p)	720p/1080i/1080p
Online service	Free for the first six months	\$50 for 12-month Live Gold Subscription	Free
Wireless connectivity	Built-in	Sold separately	Built-in
Controller	Wii-remote and nunchuk	Xbox 360 wireless controller	Sixaxis wireless controller

button like a 'shift', enabling the player to activate motion-sensing on the fly. Elegant.

Seriously, the pad's not going to rumble?

Probably not. At time of writing, Immersion – one of the front-runners of pad-vibration technology – has offered Sony a way to incorporate rumble technology and motion-sensing in one DualShock-sized pad. Sony has politely declined, though, citing the cost of incorporating the technology into the joypad as a limiting factor. Nonetheless, there's nothing to stop third-party companies making rumble-enabled pads. Developer support in-game will depend on how many pads are sold, though.

Will I be able to plug in an old-style DualShock?

No. There's no port for it and no plans to release an adaptor.

Is online really free?

Yes. All the basic online features – including matchmaking and chat – are free. Most games will be free to play online, but ones that require more advanced infrastructure – like massively multiplayer RPGs, for instance – will charge a subscription fee.

How do rankings work?

That's up to developers. Full Auto 2, for instance, automatically uploads win and loss stats to the Gamespy website. Sony isn't forcing developers to include a set of standard online features – like Xbox's achievements system – so they're free to include as much or as little support for online gaming as they want.

Do we need discs at all?

Ken Kutaragi doesn't think so. Speaking to Japanese website PC Impress Watch, PS3's creator said, "I expect even the hard disk to disappear eventually. If you have all the data on servers, you probably no longer need disk drives..." Still, that's speculation and unlikely to happen for quite a few years.

Do I really have to buy an HDTV?

No. You'll still be able to play PS3 games – they just won't look as

breathhtakingly sharp. And you'll still benefit from PS3's technical clout: seeing an entire fleet of cyborg elephants would look good even on a black and white portable.

Can I play online against HDTV owners if I'm playing through a standard telly?

Yep.

What does 'HD Ready' actually mean?

It's the official label for HDTVs sold in Europe. If a telly bears the sticker, then you're guaranteed that the set can display at least 720 widescreen lines (resulting in 'true HD' visuals for 720p), and has sockets capable of accepting 720p and 1080i signals. Be very wary of any set claiming to be HD but without the sticker.

Is Blu-ray supposed to replace DVD?

Well, that's the plan. Major studios like Warner, Paramount, Fox and Disney have all announced their support for Blu-ray, but there's a rival format in the form of HD-DVD, which is backed by Microsoft and Toshiba. Whoever wins though, hi-def is here to stay.

How much is a standalone Blu-ray player?

To you, sir? A grand.

Will games ever fill the 50GB Blu-ray discs?

Probably. Resistance apparently already nudges the 20GB mark. But check this out: TDK recently announced that it's made a working Blu-ray disc that stores 200GB on a single-sided, six-layer disc. In comparison, DVDs, which Xbox 360 uses, currently max out at 8.5GB.

Can you record onto Blu-ray?

Not using PS3. Although, Sony released recordable Blu-ray discs earlier this year, there's no way to write to them using the PS3. So take down that Jolly Rodger.

Is it shiny?

Like the glint in God's eye.

Industry insight

Top developers reveal why they heart PS3

Mie Kumagai

Producer

Virtua Tennis, AM3, Sega



"Developing a title for PS3 is something like diving into a deep sea without knowing how deep it actually is, with regards to what the hardware limit is. The floor may be just below, but may be 100 metres or 1,000 metres below. We creators are looking forward to seeing the floor and of course enjoying the dive."

Randy Pitchford

CEO Gearbox

Brothers In Arms



"The PlayStation 3 is a very exciting platform. Of particular interest to us is the massive storage potential of the media and the new motion-sensing capabilities of the Sixaxis controller. We are harnessing the power of the Unreal Engine 3 on the PlayStation 3 to deliver the highest definition war experience in existence."

Yannis Mallat

Studio Head

Assassin's Creed, Ubisoft Montreal



"The PS1 and the PS2 have revealed their true potential over the long term, but with the PS3 we're already amazed by the results we're achieving. So no doubt the PS3 will deliver a true next-gen gaming experience during its first year of existence."

Hamish Young

Producer

Burnout 5, Criterion Games



"The PS3 has this incredible 'supercomputer on a chip' cell processor and the speedy NVidia graphics chip which allow us to blow away many of the technical limitations under which we have previously worked. The people who will play the game at the end of the day don't care about how it was all achieved, just that they are having an amazing time, but this technology allows us to achieve that experience."

Noriyuki Shimoda

Producer

Virtua Fighter 5, Sega



"We are having more fun and challenges than ever before as we are working on a console which exceeds the capability of an up-to-date arcade motherboard. The days of development are filled with surprise."

Serge Hascoet

Chief Creative Officer

Ubisoft



"I think all our development teams that have been working on PS3 titles can attest that it is an incredibly powerful machine. Once we are able to fully master its capacities, it promises to create a level of realism that has yet to be seen."

PS3 next issue...

Don't miss issue 2 of Official PlayStation Magazine. We'll be revealing the UK launch latest, 'going big' on the most exciting PS3 games, delivering more insider info and interviewing more of gaming's brightest brains. We'll also start complete coverage across all three PlayStation formats – including exclusive news, reviews, features and plenty of outspoken opinion.

ON SALE 10 JANUARY

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heftauto ostpl newsstrangleholdhotpxlsegarallytheoutsiderghostreconov
lordjstcaus sporeluminesnbastreethellgatelondoncommandandconquereight
htdayprinceofpersiateamfortressdevilmaycryworldinconflictdeadrisingstartrek
legacyshadowofthecolossuscallofdutygearsofwarkaneandlynchdeadmensam
dalofhonorgunpeythedarknesslegostarwarsskingdomheartsgodhand
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crisisgoldenaxetombraiderkillzonetonyhawksbattlestationsmidwaymassffecto
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pidermanarmyoftwoelebitsciphercomplexhalflifebluedragon tigerwoodspgator
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egendofzeldafrontlinesfuelofwarinterstellarmarinestoo manyakuza
ioratchetandclankarmedassaultworldofwarcraftdirtyharrybarrowhillpoke
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Launch

56 Assassin's Creed
Stealth goes next-gen as you become a Crusades-era contract killer in PS3's most ambitious game.

Previews launch games

The day one line-up is strong like bears

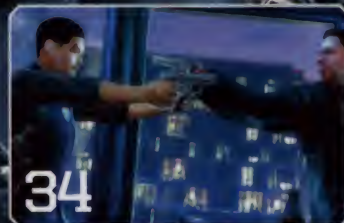
Dry your eyes, Europe. The PS3 delay has several silver linings: more machines available on launch day means less chance of being crushed by kids with crudely forged pre-orders. Plus, by March, any kinks in the online system should've been ironed out thanks to feedback from US and Japanese punters. (Hey, who said guinea pigs?) But the real bonus is the launch line-up. Not only will we get the same games as our trans-oceanic cousins, but we'll also scoop up all the other titles which are slated to come out between November and March. The exact line-up won't be finally decided until a couple of weeks before the big day, but even conservative estimates point to around 30 games. Which is where we come in. Think of us like trusty sherpas, guiding you up the next-generation's tricky north face, carefully ensuring your PS3 collection is all-killer, no-filler.



30

MotorStorm

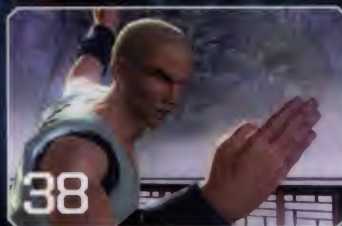
Beautiful, loud and mucky like a fox going through a curry house's bins, this off-road racer is PS3's good-time guy.



34

Stranglehold

Think Tony Hawk's trick lines, the gunplay of Max Payne and the destructibility of Black. Then think 'definite pre-order'.



38

Virtua Fighter 5

Settle every argument - whose turn is it to make tea? Are you dating my ex? - with a few rounds of the deepest fighting game on PS3.



Launch

PlayStation 3 exclusive
The action occurs in 1950s glamour locations like Leeds, Grimsby, Manchester and Cheddar Gorge.

Full, without Sony's censorship
Meet the Chimera – virally mutated alien abominations that spill out of Russia in the 1940s.

PlayStation 3 exclusive
This automatic rifle comes with a grenade launcher. Other guns blend '50s design with alien tech.

PS3 Exclusive Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Insomniac Games

Resistance: Fall Of Man

Ⓐ Alien Ⓑ Gun-gasm × Manchester Ⓔ Invasion



Quick pitch

Alternative history

WW2 never happened. Instead, the nations of the world left each other alone through the '40s.

Alien invasion

Then the drooling, brain-sucking aliens, the Chimera, turn up with their teeth.

Diesel-punk

Humanity adapts and fights back using homebrew retro-tech.

20th Anniversary

Events take place over four days as mankind mounts a last-ditch offensive to defeat the Chimera.

Slavoring, razor-toothed lizard-men spring from the wall, futuristic shooters attached to their arms. Seconds later they're cut to pieces in a hail of gunfire. A nearby grenade goes off, spewing spiked projectiles that indiscriminately tear

through friends and foe alike. A nearby Marine fires off a plasma-like ball of energy that hangs in the air for a few moments, flinging white-hot trails of murderous energy across the battlefield. Truly, this is what the dark future of our dreams looks like. Except where did that

red telephone box come from? Is that a beautifully quaint cobbled street? As we're distracted by background details, a roaming monstrosity reaches out and plucks the startled head from our body. As we drop to the cobbles, it hits us, we've been fighting for *Grimsky*. ▶



Launch

Be smart, not too bloody
Black-Ops boffins have enabled mankind to adapt stolen alien gadgets into high-tech weapons.

Death from above
This is a slipskull: a wall-climbing alien that hides in the shadows and reminds you to look up.

Rumour monger

What other aliens will be in the game?



Sexy alien

Unlike your "sexy" resident, does it for you.
Odds 90-1 against.



Kind alien

Nine of The Chimera would love to be your friend.
Odds 500-1 against.



Comedy alien

It's hard to laugh as your species is being eaten.
Odds 188-1 against.

Resistance: Fall Of Man charts an alternative history that broke from our own reality some time around the 1930s. Hitler never goose-stepped to power in this world, and the 1940s began with the world's nations maintaining peace by closing their borders and choosing isolation. The peace didn't last long.

No one knows quite how it happened, but at some point Russia, cut off for years by giant border walls, opened its gates and unleashed waves of repellent, demi-human scum. Before long, the Chimera (as they become known) had overrun Europe, killing thousands, and

contaminating many more. The infected were incubated in vast alien factories, slowly mutating into Chimera themselves. You pick up the story as Sgt Nathan Hale, a US soldier battling alongside the remains of the decimated British forces over four crucial days as the last human survivors mount one last push to stop the Chimera. The plot itself is unwound gradually through the testimony of another resistance member, Rachel Parker.

Developer Insomniac's aim with Resistance was to combine a sense of familiarity with the unknown. Where the

Chimera have settled in England, for example, they've morphed their environment into a twisted reflection of their alien selves. Think a fanged Carol Smiley does Changing Planets as sleepy English hamlets and the London Underground are mutated and fused with cold, futuristic architecture, while the Midlands is dotted with laboratories and metal-lined chasms that probe deep into the Earth's crust.

When it comes to the Chimera, Insomniac president Ted Price doesn't mince words. "They're ugly sons of bitches," he explains. And they're divided





❑ Your squad don't take orders from you, but do take bullets to the face. Over and over again.

❑ Like COD3, the game can render lots of bodies on screen to give you that 'wave assault' feeling.



❑ As if an eight-foot alien with a face like a bag of knives isn't bad enough, wait until you get a load of building-sized robo-tanks with pincer legs.



into a range of nasty combat species – the humanoid wall-climber, the 'Slipskull', and the insectoid 'Widowmaker', a huge, decapitation-happy beast that reaches 60ft in height.

Surviving their attentions will be hard enough, but 'Hero Moments' will require you to save the necks of your squad too. We stood by, helpless and hapless, in the face of a series of preventable deaths, in which grunts were stomped, savaged, speared, and shot.

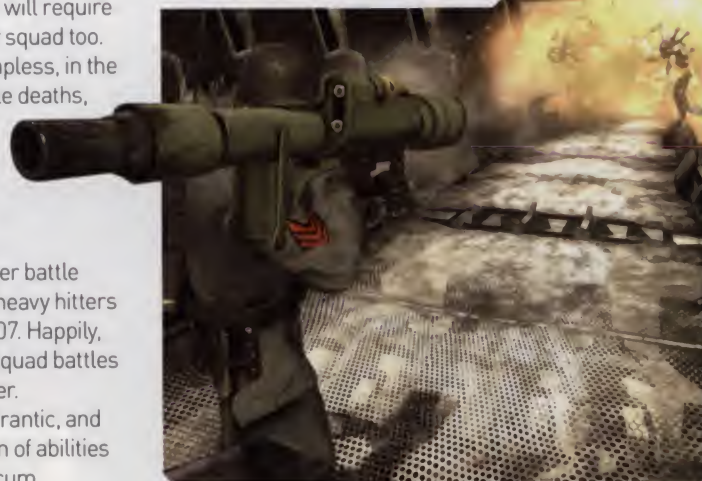
Alien war

Resistance has an even bigger battle online where it's up against heavy hitters like Call Of Duty 3 and UT2007. Happily, the game's human vs alien squad battles translate well into multiplayer.

The action is smooth and frantic, and there's an interesting division of abilities between man and mutant scum. Humans can sprint and have access to radar, while the Chimera can trigger a temporary rage mode that enables them to move faster and see through walls. Each Chimera also has 400 separate animations, leading to some very unsettling organic movement. Insomniac promises a staggering 40-players per skirmish online, as well as four-man, split-screen multiplayer for face-to-face living room rivalry.

Currently the developers are also experimenting with some potentially controversial battlefield tactics. Like rigging a teammate with explosives and sending him on a one-way trip into an

❑ Nothing says 'please leave our planet now' like a LAARK rocket to the chops.



enemy base. Bear in mind though, volunteers may be scarce...

At the end of our time with the game, Insomniac showed us one last piece of eye candy – an exploding Hedgehog grenade. It fires out 50 spikes, each operating under its own physics and each making a different noise depending on what part of the scenery it ricochets off. It not only provides an impressive demonstration of next-gen power, but also reveals the sort of jagged, noisy chaos Resistance will throw in your face from first cry to last gasp. We've seen the future, and it looks a lot like Grimsby.

Sixaxis



Shake Struggle

When a sneaky creature attempts to grab you, wobble the pad like crazy to shake him off.

Gun list Three great ways to kick scaly alien hide

Rocket launcher The LAARK

Comes complete with secondary fire special features: make a projectile hover in the sky, guide it around the battlefield or even split it into a host of mini-rockets that home in on enemies like tiny explosive hornets.



Homing gun The Bull's Eye

Handy for the soldier who hasn't got time to aim, you can 'tag' the target and move on, while your bullets home in on the enemy. You can also create swarms of bullets, suspended in mid-air, that can be guided towards enemies.



Plasma cannon The Hailstorm

Liberated from the Chimera, the Hailstorm spits out 20 plasma shots per second. It also releases an airborne drone that unloads ammunition against everything in range, enabling you to move, switch weapons and attack enemies from two different positions.





Launch



Just about anything with wheels and an engine can compete in races.



PS3 Exclusive **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Evolution Studios

MotorStorm

△ This ○ Is ⊗ Pure □ Filth

One of life's great lessons is to always under-promise and then over-deliver. That way everyone thinks you're some kind of miracle worker. Shame nobody told the MotorStorm team. Their dirt-caked, off-road racer was originally unveiled with a spectacular trailer featuring phenomenal

mud-spray effects and buggies cartwheeling through the air in a blizzard of debris. The video was so spectacular that most pundits immediately dismissed it as a pre-rendered hype fantasy. Subsequent gameplay showings only satisfied the cynics by failing to live up to the fireworks of the first footage.



❑ Punishing ragdoll physics make wipeouts a flailing, jerking, eye-watering scream.



vehicles plough through the dirt, they churn and break up the track into new channels, bumps and jumps that literally change the course of the race.



Appetite for destruction

It all comes together when buggies, pickups, bikes and rally cars start colliding like loose change in a washing machine. It's a total free-for-all with carnage whipped up at the whim of the game's powerful physics engine. Bikers are thrown onto your bonnet, before being bucked clear into the path of an onrushing truck. Then a buggy flips, but rather than veer around it, the trailing biker uses it as an impromptu ramp and nabs an extra couple of places. The biggest danger of all are your ultra-aggressive rivals, who think nothing of shunting you into a ravine and then screeching off while flicking the V at your smouldering ragdoll body.

None of which would matter if the handling wasn't right. Fortunately, MotorStorm gets it spot on. The buggies are bouncy, the bikes have got real poke, and the big rigs let you steam straight

But here comes the happy ending: our latest play of MotorStorm confirms that the visuals are in fact incredibly close to the original video and it's also the most instantly entertaining game in the PS3 launch line-up. The track design, AI and physics are all created with chaos in mind. There are eight courses, which range from arid dust bowls to slippery mud baths but all feel a bit The Hills Have Eyes. Each track features multiple routes, destructible scenery and lethal plunges. Better still, the terrain conditions change during a race thanks to real-time track deformation. As

through the carnage. There's also a brilliant speed boost which is only limited by your engine temperature – hammer it too hard and your vehicle pops in a shower of hot metal. It creates a classic risk/reward dynamic that encourages brinksmanship with the needle nudging the red throughout.

The one feature that fails is the Sixaxis motion-sensitive steering. It's intended as an alternative to using the sticks, but currently feels too loose and needs work if it's to make the final cut.

Still, MotorStorm doesn't need gimmicks. This is a no-brainer entertainer and, assuming the developers can deliver on the goal of 16-player online racing, it's also likely to be an early star on the PlayStation Network.

❑ So which vehicle has the edge? The real-time track deformation means that can change from lap to lap.



Dev talk



"Everyone keeps asking if the screenshots are renders, so we know we're going in the right direction."

Pete Smith
Senior Producer



Launch

customisation

browse background themes



PlayStation 3 **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Sony London

SingStar

⬆ Solos ⬇ Duets ✕ Booze ⬆ Regret

For its PS3 debut SingStar has jumped online with SingStore, the new karaoke iTunes enabling you to download fresh songs to your machine. The line-up is a mix of new tracks and the PS2 SingStar back catalogue, plus Sony plans to make new tracks available as soon as they're released. No word yet on the cost, but who can put a price on getting that new McFly number to showcase your vocal skills?

My SingStar Online is the hub of the service, a personalised homepage where you can browse the latest tracks and upload pictures and video clips.

On top of this, while talking to SingStar senior producer Paulina Bozek, we mentioned the prospect of playing instruments in the game. She replied, "This is a possibility. SingStar is all about music so including more ways to perform is something we're interested in."

✕ SELECT ⬆ BACK ▶ VISIT SING STORE

Motives What's eating Michael Schumacher?

Cheating

Ramming rivals off the track, ruining qualifying sessions and ordering teammates to surrender races - all in a day's work.

Secretly hating Ralf

Harbours unspoken resentment towards Ralfie. He's younger, has a smaller chin and is still racing in F1.



More cheating

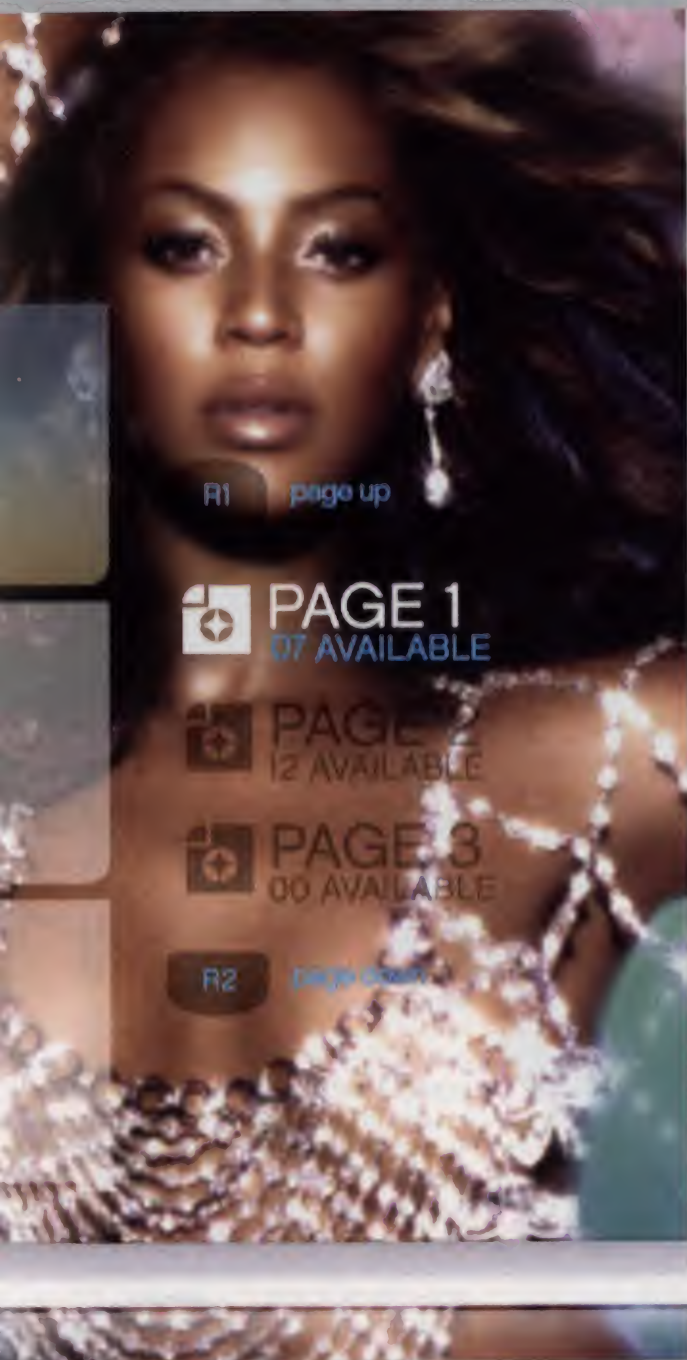
Visions of Damon Hill's sad face as he slides over the grass at the Australian GP in 1994, car suspension and title challenge in tatters.

Retiring

His controversial career over, Micky can enjoy a long retirement spent relaxing on beaches and playing in charity football matches.

✓ The teams, drivers and liveries will be accurate for the 2006 season.





How it works... SingStar online



1 Go to homepage

This is the central page where you log in. Here you'll be able to manage your details and see your statistics. Things like score, ranking and friends online will be shown, along with any media you've uploaded. It will also keep you informed of the latest available tracks to download so you can keep adding your favourite new music to the SingStar tracklist.

2 Customisation

You'll be able to create your own playlists for different occasions as well as personalise SingStar. For example, you can download new wallpapers or menu skins of your favourite artists. Why not take care of all your SingStar business while gazing upon the exquisite form of Beyoncé? Plus, you can add extras like voice effects.



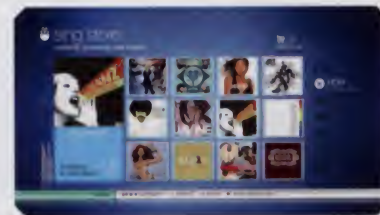
4 Buy new songs

SingStore will enable you to buy new songs and download them to your machine. A library of over 300 tracks will be available and regularly updated, while you can use any PS2 discs you might already own to unlock the relevant tracks online. The service will even make recommendations based on what you've purchased. Prices to be announced.



3 Share the fun

Any pictures or videos you take of your post pub singalong can be uploaded and shared with others. Whether anyone wants to hear your drunken rendition of Queen's 'Don't Stop Me Now' remains to be seen. Visitors will be able to leave comments so be prepared for the worst. Doubtless an abusive language censorship update will follow soon after.



5 PSP connectivity

SingStar will link up with your PSP and enable you to download video clips to take away, so you'll always have your best performances at hand. Just think how pleased your friends will be to have the honour of watching you murder Snow Patrol's 'Run' at the weekend.

Developer: Slightly Mad Games Format: PS3 ETA: March 2007 Publisher: Sony Dev: Sony Liverpool

Formula One 06

⬆️ Wheels ⬆️ Water ✕ Aggression ⬆️ Speed

The most noticeable thing about Formula One 06 on PS3 is the water. Stay at the front of the pack and it's lovely: little speckles of glistening moisture flecked across the windshield, looking realistic enough to touch. Get stuck behind another car though, and it's a different story: huge plumes of spray jet up and obscure your vision, ruining your line and demonstrating just how PS3's graphics can really affect gameplay.

Like its PS2 counterpart, Formula One 06 offers the chance to play through a five-year career as either a driver or engineer, starting out with the likes of the Toro Rosso team and building your reputation until you're fending off offers from Renault and Williams. The entire F1 circus is represented, from the tension of the paddock as you make last-minute tweaks to your car, to crashes, punctures and other track hazards. Will it be enough? Judgement will have to be reserved, this is one series that desperately needs a cool fuel injection after years of flat performances.





Launch



The Merc... Max Payne **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Midway **Dev** Midway

Stranglehold

Ⓐ Hard Ⓑ Boiled Ⓐ Woo Ⓑ Action

▲ In classic Woo style, Stranglehold makes violence beautiful. Don't get mad – get firecrackers.

Nightfall in Hong Kong, and a figure pads across the marble museum floor, seemingly oblivious to the Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton that looms overhead. The figure stops, turns on his heel, and for a moment, silence falls – man and monster, alone in the dark. Or are they? A distant click makes the figure – a cop, Chinese, in grey shirt and jeans – dart for his holster. Multiple footsteps quicken in the darkness... but our cop is already in motion, sprinting through the gloom on a curve, and unleashing shot after shot of

cold, hard lead between the T-Rex's dangling, trunk-like legs and out into the blackness beyond.

As shadowy, indistinct figures raise barrels and return fire, a dusty rain of dry bone fills the air. Minutes from now, the whole museum will be little more than shattered ceramics, smashed display cases and bloodied bodies. And if our cop doesn't want to be one of them, he's got to move. Spying one final rib hanging temptingly, he takes a running jump, grabs hold and swings into the darkness.

This is John Woo's Stranglehold. John

who? Well, back in 1992, Hong Kong director John Woo made a film called *Hard Boiled* that changed the action film... scratch that, changed the action genre, beyond recognition. Countless imitations – from 'bullet time' gaming classic *Max Payne* to *Reservoir Dogs* to *The Matrix* – queued up to worship at Woo's new blueprint for balletic ballistics, but none quite managed to nail a cap in the old master. Now, Woo has returned to continue the adventures of *Hard Boiled*'s star – Hong Kong cop Inspector Tequila (originally played by Chow Yun Fat) – who

▼ The Mexican stand-off: not even bullet time can save you now.

5 big questions Woo'd you like some answers?

1

Is Chow really the star?

Yep. The actor was body scanned for the game. The motion-capture was done by stuntmen, but the voice is full-Fat.

2

Another dodgy licence?

Not at all. John Woo has been involved from start to finish. Everything from script advice to camera direction.

3

Are there vehicles?

Midway promises there will be several outside locations, and so far jeeps and speedboats have been confirmed.

4

Is there multiplayer?

Midway promise eight-player online deathmatches. Although how this will integrate bullet time remains to be seen.

5

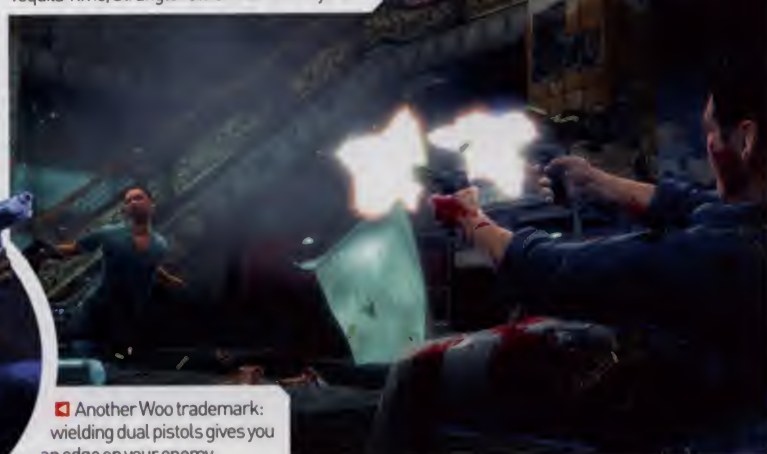
Is debris permanent?

Yup. Every single thing you kill, destroy or explode hangs around to be admired at the end of each level.



▶ Guide Chow Yun Fat through the seediest reaches of the Hong Kong underworld.

▶ A backwards jump is all it takes to trigger Tequila Time, Stranglehold's bullet time system.



▶ Another Woo trademark: wielding dual pistols gives you an edge on your enemy.



▶ This is the museum. Note the ominous T-Rex shell above – it's still intact, but for how long?

must save his family from the Russian Mafia. The developers insist Woo has been heavily involved in the game's development and there's no question that its early promise relies on faithful translation of the great director's trademark gunplay.

Tequila slammer

Videogame Woo naturally converts into a third-person action adventure packed with twin-pistol fun, acrobatic combat, and multi-level, fully interactive environments. Chinese tea rooms, luxury condos, waterfront stilt-cities – they look like they've taken a lifetime to create (but take a Chai tea break to reduce to smoking wreckage). It's awe-inducing destructive fun – Midway calls it 'Massive D', and believe us – massive is the word.

Interactive environments? "How about sliding down stair railings, jumping onto roll carts, swinging from chandeliers, zipping down power lines and spinning around poles all while still being able to aim and fire at enemies?" explains Midway's Brian Eddy, executive producer

"It's awe-inducing destructive fun – Midway calls it Massive D"

of Stranglehold. The action is smooth and intuitive, with the game eerily attuned to whether you're trying to slide along an aisle on a dessert trolley, or make a quick exit down a banister. This isn't just eye-candy, either. Interacting with the environment triggers 'Tequila Time', a temporary effect that slows time to a crawl, letting you pick off multiple enemies in the blink of an eye. Like bullet time? Yeah, well, Woo invented it.

Slow-motion action is an integral part of Stranglehold's gameplay. "If you're doing cool moves like swinging from a chandelier while taking out enemies in Tequila Time, you earn style points that benefit you in the long term," explains Eddy. "Players can save up these style points to spend on special moves or upgrades to Tequila. So slo-mo is not just

a gimmick that gamers are going to find tired". Use Tequila Time right and you can chain moves together into combos and push your style points through the roof. Soon you'll be executing tricks like The Tequila Bomb, which sees our plucky Inspector spin through 360°, unleashing a hail of bullets that cut any nearby bad guys to mincemeat.

Woo's definitely left his mark on this game. From sweaty-fingered Mexican stand-offs to the special moves that enable our hero to pirouette in gossamer slo-mo, blasting away as doves flutter past. His movies are often accused of offering style over substance, which arguably makes the pure wham-blam of videogames the ideal medium for him. On the evidence so far, that's an argument gamers are going to win.

Did you know?

John Woo's directorial debut, *The Young Dragons*, involved a certain light choreographer called Jackie Chan. Woo is a Christian and the doves that often feature in his films are meant to represent a soul being released at the point of death. The Wizard Of Oz is Woo's favourite film. The Beretta 92 is his favourite gun, appearing in nearly all of his movies.

PS3 Exclusive **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Incognito Entertainment

Warhawk

△ Flybys ○ Missiles ✕ Wingmen ◻ Sixaxis

Best Warhawk moment so far: tearing around in a Jeep, another player manning the machine gun, looking up to see dozens of jets dog-fighting, and smiling in the knowledge that there's a real person in each of the cockpits. Worst Warhawk moment so far: flying into the side of a mountain like a sparrow hitting a patio window while I'm grappling with the Sixaxis pad, which you tilt and rotate to steer. We're hoping it's just a case of needing more time to settle in with the motion-sensitive controller's subtleties because, with multiple vehicle types and 32-player support, Warhawk

should be one of the stars of the online PlayStation network. The focus is clearly on the chaotic multiplayer mode, which is frantic and accessible in the same vein as developer Incognito's previous work on the Twisted Metal series. There's also a fully-fledged single-player game, which Incognito claims will feature hundreds of AI-controlled aircraft battling it out at once.

Not that Warhawk is *all* about the aerial combat. As the bone-shaking jeep excursion hints at, we're talking about mass battles that rage simultaneously in the air

and on the ground. You'll tackle the invading Chernovan army up close and ugly as part of the Eucadian infantry (your home town team) and you can prow

around in tanks too. Basically, if you can see it, you can jump in and make war with it.

Warhawk is ambitious and wants to deliver nothing less than a total war experience, Battlefield-style. There's much more to it than just the flying elements seen so far, so keep watching the skies, and the ground.

Engine performance

You can switch between normal flight and hovering with a quick tap of △. That should make it easier to land smoothly, although, if you're trying to land in the enemy base expect to be greeted by a not-so-welcoming committee. In which case, double-tap ▢ to activate the afterburners and make a sharp exit.

Landing gear

Aerial combat rules, but you can also set your kite down to drive tanks and buggies. You can even tote a rocket launcher on foot.

Manoeuvring

The telltale beep of a missile lock calls for immediate evasive action. Pressing ▢ to barrel-roll buys you time, but if you're feeling all Top Gun, then head to the scenery and veer off at the last second.

Guns

Truth is, the twin-mounted machine guns are poor at downing enemies. To notch a kill you'll need one of the many pick-ups littering the sky. These range from missiles to a purple electro-shock beam.

Prequels

Previously in the series

Warhawk

(C64, 1986)
Warhawk first debuted on the Commodore 64 home computer back in 1986. Back then it was an uninspired space-based scrolling shooter.

Warhawk

(PS1, 1995)
Multiplayer mode aside, this 32-bit Warhawk featured all the key elements found in the PS3 remake - vertical take-off fighters, homing missiles and 360° flight. At the rate the next game should be out on PS5 in late 2015.

Sixaxis

It's motion sensitive...



**Pull up/
down**
**Climb/
Dive**

Tilt the pad and your VTOL craft will veer up and soar.



**Roll left/
right**
Bank

Lift either side of the Sixaxis to turn the plane.



Tilt
Hover

In hover mode, the craft drifts in whatever direction you tip the pad.



Time West... Twisted Metal **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sega **Dev** Pseudo Interactive

Full Auto 2 Battlelines

△ Maims ○ Flames × And ◻ Automobiles

Physics. It's a next-gen watchword, and what better way to show off the new realism than with overpowered cars? Overpowered cars packing missiles. That's how. Full Auto 2 Battlelines features 25 customisable muscle cars, SUVs, lowriders and 'industrial vehicles', all equipped with serious weaponry. The aim is to 'own' all six districts of Staunton City by winning rival cars and guns, and, with gleeful

inevitability, destruction is as important as racing. Falling masonry in any of the 20-plus tracks can block or even crush pursuing cars, while a well-placed missile can open new shortcuts in the shattered city facades. It really is all about the destruction – a fact that makes the game's Unwreck ability (see right) all the more welcome.

Wondering about the first game? Xbox 360 owners were the guinea pigs, and

their reward is... nothing. This vastly-improved sequel is a PS3 exclusive, and flanks a branching single-player career with six online multiplayer modes – including base assaults, objective-capturing, team and solo deathmatch and a new Arena mode. This last one is described as being 'gladiatorial', referring no doubt to the Ford-owning, rocket-firing gladiators of ancient Rome. "At my signal, buckle up and unleash hell!"



Rewind time



Don't die, just try again...

What with all the shuntily flaming automobiles hurt promised by Full Auto 2, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this is not a game that gives drivers much of a second chance. Thankfully, should you find yourself at the fatal end of a rocket-assisted pile-up, then all is not lost. Unwreck is a handy time-reversing ability that enables you to back out of quills, fudds and chaos-fiddling fatalities and take a second run at survival – not unlike a certain time-travelling Roman prince.

037



■ We can almost smell the sour tang of British defeat from here.

Sporting Classic **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sega **Dev** Sega-AM2

Virtua Tennis 3

△ Serve ○ Grunt × Chalkdust ◻ Strawberries

Three buttons might sound simple – one each for spin, slice and lob – but there are hidden depths to Sega's centre court racket-twanger. The secret is in the timing. If you're in position early you'll unleash some unstoppable drives. Get caught stabbing buttons while dashing to catch up, however, and your returns will limp over the net. So while the controls appear basic, there's huge potential to develop your game and improve your player's speed and serve strength. The

Sixaxis pad will push the serve system still further by using motion control to whack balls into play.

While there's plenty of multiplayer fun, including new mini-games (but no online option, sadly), the meat of the game is the improved World Tour mode, which includes five-set matches for the first time. The tour pits you against the cream of the circuit including players such as Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Amelie Mauresmo and Martina Hingis.



Launch

PS3 Exclusive | Format PS3 | ETA Spring 2007 | Pub Sega | Dev Sega-AM2

Virtua Fighter 5

△ Who ○ You × Can □ Play



□ Aoi Umenokouji

Nationality Japanese
Blood type A
Hobby Ikebana
Height 5'3"
Weight 49kg
Occupation Student
Fighting style Aikijutsu
Best move Koromoguruma
→→△



□ Lion Rafale

Nationality French
Blood type AB
Hobby Collecting knives
Height 5'7"
Weight 63kg
Occupation Student
Fighting style Tourou-Ken
Best move Senshippo
→→△

New

□ Eileen

Nationality Chinese
Fighting style Monkey Kung-Fu
Profile Hot new contender for the title of 'the cute one', Eileen idolises reigning prettiness champ Pai Chan and has entered the tournament to get close to her idol. Raised by her granddad, the stalkerette fights with Chinese monkey-style kung fu, with the emphasis on deception and rolling around a lot. Attacks like the Crescent Kick make her look uncannily similar to Tekken's Ling Xiaoyu.
Best move Sarunou Toten
→△•△



□ Vanessa Lewis

Nationality Unknown
Blood type AB
Hobby Singing
Height 5'9"
Weight 55kg
Occupation Security guard
Fighting style Vale Tudo
Best move Front Sleeper
→△△



□ Jacky Bryant

Nationality American
Blood type A
Hobby Training
Height 5'11"
Weight 75kg
Occupation Indy Car driver
Fighting style Jeet Kune Do
Best move Short Slide Shuffle
△△→△△△←



□ Lei-Fei

Nationality Chinese
Blood type B
Hobby Prayer
Height 5'9"
Weight 63kg
Occupation Monk
Fighting style Shaolin-Ken
Best move Shatenshou
▽▽△



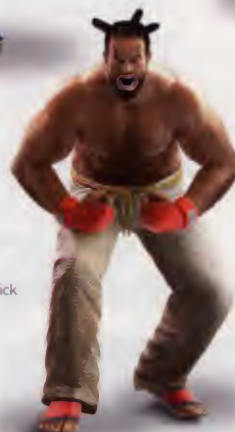
□ Goh Hinogami

Nationality Japanese
Blood type AB
Hobby Collecting silver trinkets (like a magpie)
Height 5'9"
Weight 66kg
Occupation Assassin
Fighting style Judo
Best move Tsuchigumo
→→△△



□ Sarah Bryant

Nationality American
Blood type AB
Hobby Sky Diving
Height 5'8"
Weight 55kg
Occupation Student
Fighting style Jeet Kune Do
Best move Combo Somersault Kick
△△△△△

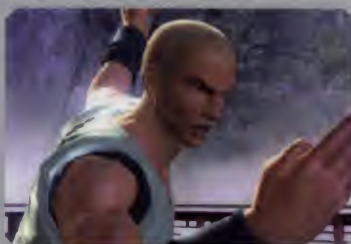


□ Jeffry McWild

Nationality Australian
Blood type AB
Hobby Reggae Music
Height 6'
Weight 111kg
Occupation Fisherman
Fighting style Pancratium
Best move Splash Mountain
△△△▽△△△△△

The hook Why VF5 is a must for all fight fans

Of the big three Japanese fighting series—Soul Calibur and Tekken being the others—VF is the purist's choice. Beyond the first few CPU opponents, any attempt to button mash will see your ass handed back to you. Aside from the oceanic combo system, two new characters and kiss-the-screen visuals, there's also the prospect of online play. Sega's staying quiet, but if there isn't some sort of network mode we'll eat our bodyweight in raw Fugu.



The path to wisdom involves much chopping.



The combo system focuses on counters.



"Oh Christ, I've turned up in a nightie again."



Wolf Hawkfield

Nationality Canadian
Blood type O
Hobby Karaoke
Height 5'11"
Weight 101kg
Occupation Woodsman (not the Kevin Bacon kind)
Fighting style Wrestling
Best move Frankensteiner
 ↗△×



Akira Yuki

Nationality Japanese
Blood type O
Hobby Kung-Fu
Height 5'11"
Weight 79kg
Occupation Kung-Fu teacher
Fighting style Hakkyoku-Ken
Best move Utankyaku
 →→◎



Shun Di

Nationality Chinese
Blood type O
Hobby Drinking
Height 5'4"
Weight 63kg
Occupation Herbal Doctor
Fighting style Drunken Kung-Fu
Best move Kasenko
 →△△△◎



Kage-Maru

Nationality Japanese
Blood type B
Hobby Mah-Jong
Height 5'10"
Weight 66kg
Occupation Ninja
Fighting style Ninjutsu
Best move Ryugakuh
 ↓↘→◎



Brad Burns

Nationality Italian
Blood type B
Hobby Adrenaline junkie
Height 5'10"
Weight 68kg
Occupation Kickboxer
Fighting style Muay Thai
Best move Teep Combination
 ◎◎◎



Lau Chan

Nationality Chinese
Blood type B
Hobby Poetry
Height 5'8"
Weight 77kg
Occupation Chef
Fighting style Koen-Ken
Best move Renkan Tenshinkyaku
 ◎△△◎



New

El Blaze

Nationality Mexican
Fighting style Lucha Libre
Profile Jealous of Wolf Hawkfield's fame, Rey Mysterio lookalike El Blaze is entering the VF tournament to show the superiority of Mexican Lucha Libre wrestling. He might look stocky here, but in reality he's about the same height as Tom Cruise and twice as easy to knock flying. Bonus fact: many of his moves are based on wildly popular Japanese pro-wrestler Kenta, a firm favourite with the VF team.
Best move Spinning DDT
 ←↙↘→△×◎

Pai Chan

Nationality Chinese
Blood type O
Hobby Dancing
Height 5'5"
Weight 49kg
Occupation Action film star
Fighting style Ensei-Ken/Hisou-Ken
Best move Soukyaku
 ◎◎△↓◎



Did you know?

Even without why he's in our games, always list the fighting blood types! In Japan, blood groupware thought to determine someone's personality and even way to like girls. So type O means you're likely to be athletic and confident, but still prone to arrogance.



Launch

Crossing Sony's **Format** PS3 **ETA** March **Pub** Sony **Dev** Namco Bandai

Ridge Racer 7

△ Drift ○ Boost ⊗ Draft □ Smile

PS4



▲ Upgrade your car with everything from slick new wheels to speed injecting nitrous kits.

Prequels Ridge Racer and Sony: a launch love story



Ridge Racer (PS1, 1995)

The PS1 launch title that revolutionised driving games by utilising 'drift' technique. The flashy, arcade style quickly established its priorities with speed and playability beating realism hands down. It also offered our first glimpse of Ridge Racer's mascot girl and resident eye candy Reiko Nagase.



Ridge Racer V (PS2, 2000)

With its seductive looks this had some fans hailing it the best Ridge Racer ever, even with Reiko missing in action. Players had to truly master the drift technique or learn to enjoy defeat. Sliding through a corner sideways was more important than ever as the cars could hit manic speeds of over 200mph.



Ridge Racers (PSP, 2004)

A greatest hits that compiled the best tracks from the series, and added new ones too. The game ignored the car modding trend popularised by Need For Speed, but borrowed the nitro boost from Burnout. The gush of adrenaline as you caned past other racers immediately felt like a natural part of Ridge.

All it takes is the slightest brush of the brake button, a minute change of direction and the rear-end swings out like a barn door on the outskirts of a nuclear detonation. Get it right and the car whistles through the corner at a 90° angle, powering out the other side without dropping any speed. Get it wrong and... well, it doesn't. Ridge Racer 7 has no time for fancy-dan notions like accurate physics or realistic handling. It's the anti-Gran Turismo; an unashamed arcade game that's totally out of step with the rest of the racing genre, and all the more refreshing for it.

❑ A draft meter shows how much tow you're getting from the slipstream of the car ahead.

❑ Race through Asian rainforests, mammoth industrial estates and gleaming cityscapes.



▲ Earn boosts by drifting through corners then burn up to three at once to streak ahead.

By the numbers

Players online (TBC)	14
Tracks (all reversible)	22
Cars	40
Races in the Ridge State Grand Prix mode	160
Possible tuning permutations	7150
Possible car designs	375,000
Number of Ridge Racer games to date	16



▲ Fame point rankings measure player respect as well as game stats.

Ridge is synonymous with new Sony hardware launches, but these days the series isn't the system seller it once was. Or so we thought. When you play the new game two things become clear. First, it's astonishingly pretty. Glittering ocean views, blooming sunlight as you emerge from a tunnel, miles of super-detailed greenery without a single tree popping up to spoil the party... if there's a better looking game in the launch line-up we haven't seen it. Running at 60 frames per second in 1080p, Ridge Racer also sweeps in with the most beguiling argument for Sony's much-trumpeted

'true HD' standard, generating an image that's smoother, more stable and just plain sexier.

The second thing is that it's a right old laugh. Ridge Racer 7 is twitchy like an unbroken colt because, as ever, it's all about 'drifting' sideways through hairpins as you reel in the leaders. Gameplay is classic Ridge with a few tweaks such as 'drafting'. In other words you can grab a tow from the car in front, using its slipstream to build up speed and then catapult past. There's also a three-stage boost system and accompanying screen-warping effect. Boosting will be familiar to fans of the PSP version and works best when blasting out of a corner and into

❑ Original Ridge Racer girl Reiko Nagase was replaced by Ai Fukami for the fifth game, but returned after a petition from outraged fans.

a long straight. But for pure show-off value, you can't beat punching it on the approach to one of the already ball-tightening jumps.

Pick of the single-player modes is the new career-based Ridge State Grand Prix, but the real action is likely to be found online, with Namco shooting for 14-player support, teamplay, and a leaderboard that will track your online ranking with heartbreaking efficiency. "Yes! Another win and I'm up into 26,545th." Intriguingly, you'll be able to customise and tune your car (which, like the courses, ditch authenticity in favour of impact) and then use it online. There's even talk of post-release downloadable content. (Reiko wallpaper, anyone?) After some lean years, Ridge Racer is the once-ubiquitous supermodel making a spectacular comeback. Kate Moss, then.



Original Concept **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Sony Studios Santa Monica/*thatgamecompany*

Flow

△ Fishy ○ Ambient ⊗ Swooshy □ Refreshing

The first of a new breed, Flow is an online-only, e-Distribution game, exclusively available to PS3 via the PlayStation Store. Order the game (US \$14.99, UK tbc), download straight to hard drive, play. The big hope is that the online store will be filled with arcade and PS1 classics, plus new, low-cost original games that can afford to be a bit more experimental in style and play.

The big hope could turn into the big win if Flow is any guide of things to come: it's one of the most exciting things we've played on PS3 so far. It started life as a Flash game, and your origins are similarly humble. You're a tiny organism swimming around at the bottom of a righteously blue ocean accompanied by soothing ambient music. Eat prey, stay out of the gob of bigger animals, grow, and eventually evolve into a more complex creature. That's the plan although it hardly conveys the soothing beauty of this innovative experience.

There are plankton-style blobs floating everywhere, which can be gobbled up by your crescent-shaped mouth. Some prey add extra geometric segments to your body, while red morsels make you dive deeper into the ocean and blue ones make you ascend. These shifts are accompanied by beautifully understated blurring effects and tinkly musical flourishes.

As you explore the depths, you encounter larger and more dangerous sea creatures. Attacking a big jellyfish requires hit-and-run tactics, nipping vulnerable chunks off its body and then swooping higher or lower to avoid reprisals. Eventually the jellyfish collapses into a chum of shapes for your worm to feast on. It may be nature at its most brutal yet it remains charming, satisfying and relaxing, while hinting at bigger gameplay challenges to come.

Luddites can use the analogue sticks, but it's worth learning how to swim

using motion control. Initially, it feels jarring and awkward but almost imperceptibly your brain re-wires itself. The barrier between what your hands are doing and the on-screen action dissolves and suddenly you're flipping back on yourself and darting about gracefully.

Like Tetsuya Mizuguchi's games (Rez and Lumines, particularly), Flow's impact comes from its fusion of visuals, controls and audio into an inseparable whole. It's simple, unique and relaxing and we couldn't stop smiling the entire time we were playing.

1

The simple life

You start out as a tiny embryonic worm (left) swimming around a primal sea. Scoff prey (right), and try to avoid being eaten yourself.

2

Survival of the fittest

Eating grows your creature. You'll put on extra body segments and, eventually, get to paddle proudly with new oar-like limbs.

3

Adapt or die

Eat enough, and you'll evolve into a higher life form. The first transformation turns you into this pulsing, circular creature.

Did you know?

The original Flow Flash game was a student university project. Jenova Chen, the game's creator, cites director Hayao Miyazaki as a main influence. He made the films Spirited Away and Howl's Moving Castle. You can get a taste of Flow right now at <http://infrastructure.us/edu/cloud/flowing/>. Download the Flash version in either PC or Mac flavour.

Bar the demon crabs and mutant samurai, it's just like feudal Japan.



The Heart... Overdose Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Game Republic

Genji: Days Of The Blade

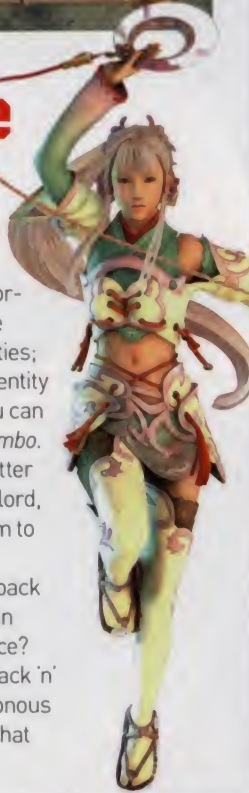
△ Stick ○ It × To □ Crabs

Questing for a sense of historical authenticity is a very noble aim, but developer Game Republic knows that sometimes you really just want to pull out a ninja sword and chop up a giant marauding crab. So while the game may be loosely based on The Tale Of The Heike (a classic of 14th Century Japanese literature, it says here) such lofty inspirations take a back seat to hectic, fantasy-style arcade warfare.

Days Of The Blade (the follow-up to PS2's Dawn Of The Samurai) is packed with detailed characters and battle scenes that teeter on the edge of visual overload. Instead of playing just one character, you can dart between four. There's Yoshitsune, a sword-wielding samurai; Benkei, a lumbering barbarian

who wields a variety of massive hammers and poles; a new character, Shizuka, a nimble warrior-maiden who wields a circular blade with long-range grappling capabilities; plus one more character, whose identity remains a secret. What's more, you can switch between characters mid-combo. In one scene, we used Benkei to batter the armour off an end-of-level warlord, then flipped to Yoshitsune to cut him to ribbons. That's teamwork.

Later levels take place on horseback and across a flotilla of ships, but can Days Of The Blade maintain the pace? The danger is that the breathless hack 'n' slash combat may become monotonous in the long term, which is exactly what happened to its predecessor.



Could Be A Contender The Club



It's just been announced but it sounds like a winner

The premise

The Club is a secret underground competition where desperate men fight against each other in *real* deathmatches for the sick kicks of a rich gambling elite.

The reality

A fast-paced, third-person shooter where you spray lead at anyone who pokes their nut out. You're rewarded for combo kill chains and hitting body parts (like the head).

The hook

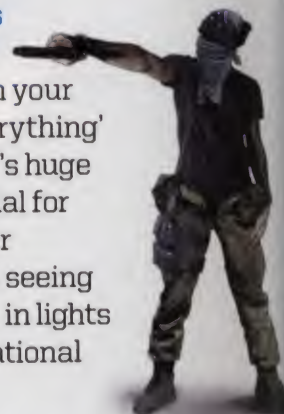
The sports-style combo scoring that converts stylish slaughter into cash prizes and bonus multipliers.

The inspiration

It's similar to Total Overdose where a skilled player could rinse out entire goon-packed levels in one, unbroken, stunt-filled combo.

The chances

It looks more enduring than your usual 'kill everything' blaster. There's huge online potential for gambling your winnings and seeing your name up in lights on the international scoreboards.

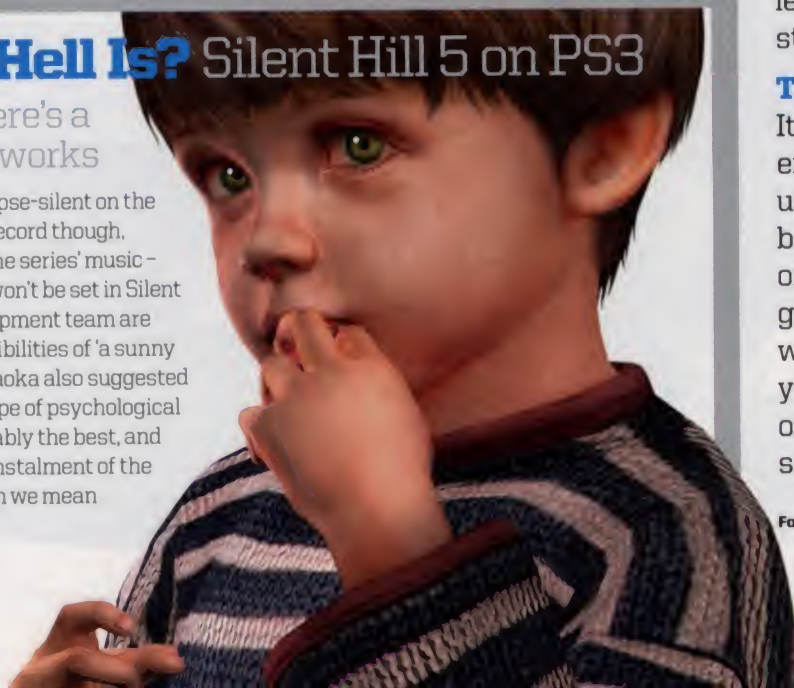


Format PS3 ETA 2007 Pub Sega Dev Bizarre Creations

Where The Hell Is? Silent Hill 5 on PS3

Konami admits there's a new version in the works

Officially, Konami is staying corpse-silent on the subject of the next Hill. Off the record though, Akira Yamaoka - composer of the series' music - has hinted that the fifth game won't be set in Silent Hill at all. Apparently the development team are interested in exploring the possibilities of 'a sunny environment gone wrong'. Yamaoka also suggested there could be a return to the type of psychological horror seen in Silent Hill 2, arguably the best, and definitely the most disturbing instalment of the series. Should be great: by which we mean 'absolutely mind-churning'.





The Game's A Bit Speedy **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Ubisoft **Dev** Bethesda Softworks

The Elder Scrolls IV **Oblivion**

Ⓐ Swords Ⓒ Sorcery ✕ Monsters Ⓚ Huge

Call it a role-playing game if you like, but Oblivion is really a new life. An epic existence where you can live out all your heroic or villainous dreams. There's no end to the things you can do. You can burgle houses at the dead of night, clear goblin squatters from silver mines or secretly poison bandit leaders. You can trade, chat, explore and pick flowers (to make lethal potions obviously). You can even go fishing. Although, in this case, the waters are full of fish that are four-feet long and bristling with dagger-like fangs. And by 'fishing' we mean 'repeatedly hammering about the gills with a sabre'.

Lose yourself

The real question is not what kind of game this is, but how far into the world of Oblivion you want to venture? There's easily 200+ hours of adventuring in the game and the '12 things to do before you die' we've listed only scratch the surface. Talk to an experienced Oblivion player, who's played the immensely successful Xbox 360 or PC versions, and you'll hear tall tales of epic adventures and incredible exploits. There are gods and secret organisations to work for, multiple plots, plus tons of missions, pranks, stunts and capers to get caught up in. It really feels like adventure lies in wait behind every door, over every hill, and in the most innocent of conversations. Even a quick hike can reveal anything from a burning city overrun by demons, to a

worried mother asking you to find her missing daughter.

Interacting with the people you meet is the best way to dive into the game. They provide the quests to chase and the monsters to track down. They are the needy you want to help, and the pompous you can't wait to lay low. They're also a fruitful source of valuable objects to discover, steal and sell.

Everyone reacts to you differently, depending on your appearance and reputation. Heroes are adored, while murdering entire villages can make small talk difficult. Fortunately, people can be coerced, buttered-up, or

Quick pitch Better than life

Create a whole new you – a sword-swinging, magic-firing, treasure-hunting adventurer.

Unleash the beast

Trolls, demons, vampires, zombies: there's only one thing deadlier prowling Oblivion – you.

Real world

Explore a huge landscape full of lush valleys, forests and snow-capped mountains.



Launch

Celebs



Sean Bean
Emperor
Martin Septim



Patrick Stewart
Emperor Uriel
Septim VII



Terence Stamp
Mankar Camoran

simply bribed to loosen their tongues. Be careful, though – a beggar will respond well to a few coins in their hand, but the captain of the guard might be mortally offended and kick off.

People power

Oblivion citizens also have their own lives to lead – working through the day for example, before hitting the local for a swift jar in the evening, and then heading home to bed. Strike out into the wilderness and you might stumble on the Imperial Watch fighting bandits, or a lone hunter tracking deer. Nothing is predetermined, the world turns whether

“The world turns whether you’re there or not – strengthening the sensation of a living environment.”

you’re there or not – strengthening the sensation of a living environment.

A central feature is the huge Imperial City, surrounded by eight towns. Each town is full of inns, shops, guildhalls and inhabited by guards, low-lives,

nobles, drunks and do-gooders. There are also plenty of villages, castles and little backwater settlements that don’t appear on maps. And then there are mountains, forests, caves and plains, filled with thieves and monsters. Each area has its own distinctive landscape, character and climate. Your adventure,

however, begins in a grubby jail cell. ‘Why’ is never really explained but within seconds you’re thrown headlong into a conspiracy. The Emperor is escorted into your cell by guards. You fear the worst, but they ignore you, throw open a secret passage and use it as an emergency escape route from pursuing assassins. It’s also your chance to get away too. Scuttling through the crumbling cellars beyond your prison prepares you for what’s in store – battles, loot, stealth, spectacular magic spells and an incredibly physical world. Soon

you’re turning cave-lurking goons’ traps against them, sending rocks tumbling down slopes to kill foes, and mastering an intuitive, convincing combat system.

This isn’t your normal stilted and staged RPG fighting. You really feel the weight of your blade and the power of your blows as you club opponents. It’s kinetic, dramatic, and free-form. When your weapon hits an enemy, you’ll draw blood and he’ll stagger back in pain. The same is true for you. And if a creature lunges forward, poised to stab your precious soft bits, then you can block with a quick raise of your shield. It’s an extraordinarily involving experience,

especially when seen from a first-person view. You’re no longer hitting buttons; you’re physically battling with your enemy, circling one another, waiting for the moment to strike or parry.

Once the introductory spell of dungeon crawling ends, you emerge from a dank tunnel into intense sunlight. It’s blinding at first, and then you focus on your surroundings – distant mountains rising beyond a placid lake. Gentle green slopes of swaying grass teem with wildlife and stretch out before you. It’s a moment of wonder, guaranteed to set your heart soaring. Not only are you released from the subterranean cellars but you’re completely free to walk in any direction and get into any kind of trouble you like.

It’s a time of darkness...

One potential avenue of adventure is to answer the Emperor’s call for help and get caught up in the dramatic events threatening to destroy the world you’ve just entered. The main story focuses on gaping holes in the universe that allow demons to romp around the place doing demon stuff. These Oblivion gates are opening up everywhere, and to enter one, defeat the demons inside and close the gate is a job for a hero. More important still, is to find out *why* the gates are appearing. If you can locate the source of evil and it shut down, then you’re pretty much guaranteed your own statue in the city centre.

So it’s a good job that your world-saving character can be created in incredible detail. From race – human, elf,

◀ You don’t have to be a big heroic tin can. There’s plenty of opportunity for stealth, and loads of magic to chuck about.

New to PS3

The exclusive PS3 missions involve resurrecting a lost order of knights called the Knights Of The Nine. Revive the order, recruit new members, rebuild their base and the mission culminates in an apocalyptic battle against the forces of evil.



Everyone has something to say and information spreads around the world because people talk to each other – a system called 'Radiant AI'.



orc, the feline khajiit or reptilian argonian – to face, build and age. Initially your class – roles like warrior, magician or thief – makes certain activities easier. Equally, some races are naturally talented – in magic, for example. Crucially, Oblivion doesn't wallow in stats like traditional RPGs. Skills and abilities, such as archery or bartering, grow the more you use them. So if you want to be a hammer-wielding bruiser with a little illusion magic thrown in for good measure, that's easily done.

The lush life

One of Oblivion's masterstrokes is to hide the technical stuff. Even with such depth, you won't drown in options because everything's amazingly streamlined. You're free to ignore skill-balancing, and just bash things over the head. Another great touch is a 'fast travel' system. Visit a location and you can then return in an instant, with travel time added on arrival.

Precious few games have the power to inspire genuine awe. As you play another corridor-lined shooter, or yearly sports sim update you might be forgiven for thinking that the thrill has gone out of games. It hasn't gone. It's still here, and it inhabits every inch of Oblivion's lush world, along with truly epic encounters, and memorable adversaries. It's the kind of event that's bringing the wonder and spectacle back to videogames and is a perfect way to launch PS3.

When Oblivion begins, the city of Kvatch has already fallen to invading Daedra demons.





Launch

The Next Big Thing **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Activision **Dev** Treyarch

Call Of Duty 3

Ⓐ WW2 Ⓒ Carnage ⓧ Shock Ⓜ Awe

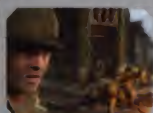
PS
048

Rivals



Medal Of Honor Airborne

(PS3, EA)
Paratroopers dish out death from above, dropping into levels from your choice of landing zones.



Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway

(PS3, Ubisoft)
Singley-tinged shooter with more emphasis on keeping your men alive.



Fall Of Liberty

(PS3, Codemasters)
What if the ending of WWII, when Winston Churchill dies and the Nazis invade the USA?

▲ The explosions in Call Of Duty 3 are phenomenal and really demonstrate what PS3 can do.

This is a shooter that makes you think you can actually smell the gunpowder. The noise, carnage and confusion fuse into a sensory overload that makes the war the centre of attention – not you and your small gun. The endless waves of Nazis, the shouts of the men fighting around you, the rattle of gunfire and the thump of explosions – throwing earth (and the occasional body) into the air – these are the things that stick in your mind. Crank up the volume, sit close to the TV, and let the experience lash you into a gun-crazy exhilaration.

A great example of Call Of Duty's combat madness is the American push

“Not many shooters can grab you to the point where you're left exhausted”

on Saint-Lô – a small French village that became vitally important following D-Day. The action kicks off in a muddy field during a storm. It's overcast and hammering it down. As lightning reflects off the sodden uniforms of the soldiers, a whistle blows, signalling the start of the assault. Almost immediately the enemy opens fire, laying down a lethal hail of bullets. Fortunately for us and our squad, we've got a slowly advancing tank to cower behind. It's cold comfort against

the cries, explosions and metallic twangs of ricocheting bullets.

Massive attack

The detail adds up to an incredible sonic and visual assault. There can be 70 soldiers on screen at once, all running, fighting and dying alongside you. The sense of immersion enhanced by the constant communication between troopers as they shout warnings like “Sniper in the left window”, or “Infantry

Quick death

Mano a mano

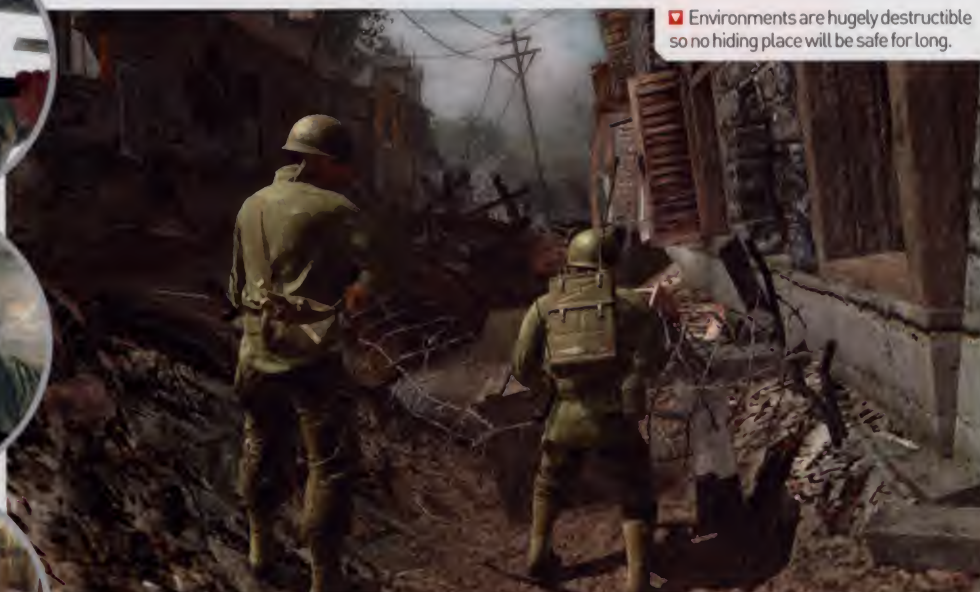
Some encounters lead to hand-to-hand scrap with Nazis, who fill the screen as they lunge for your gun.

Desperation

As you wrestle you tilt the pad to swing the rifle butt. The fight rolls all over the place as you trade blows and bounce off the walls.

Kill or be killed

Push and pull the pad to grab control of the gun. Win, and you knock your foe down and shoot him in the face.



Environments are hugely destructible so no hiding place will be safe for long.



The action is post-D-Day and you don't get to play as the Germans this time. The playable forces are the Brits (yay!), Americans, Canadians and Polish.

and attack them in the rear, risking snipers (not much better). Whatever we choose becomes the next 'stage'. We choose snipers.

World wide war

Online action comes in the usual deathmatch and capture the flag flavours plus War, where teams fight to control multiple bases. New infantry classes stir things up too with different weaponry and skill combos. General purpose troops have an even mix of guns and grenades while machine gunners or RPG soldiers are more powerful but limited to specialist roles. There are also new toys like rifle-mounted grenades and sticky bombs, which can disable tanks. Then there are sniper rifle-carrying scouts who can call in artillery strikes, or medics who can heal fallen troops (so you can call for help when 'dead' rather than respawning).

Vehicles range from unstoppable tanks to light-but-nippy motorbikes, complete with sidecar and mounted

Set-pieces are Hollywood quality, like this plane-meets-church mishap.



machine gun for a friend. All are capable of carrying passengers and can be driven using the Sixaxis motion control as a steering wheel, if you like.

Motion control puts in further cameos throughout the game. For example, planting demo charges engages a mini-game where you've got to hit the correct button combo to successfully wire up the explosives. You finally arm the device by twisting the pad to wind up the firing pin.

But what sets the Call Of Duty package apart from its WW2 rivals is its exciting blend of Hollywood flair, historical credibility and bowel-shaking action. One minute you're furiously emptying ammo into every German uniform. The next, panic, as a grenade explodes at your feet, filling the screen with smoke and dirt. Not many shooters can grab you to the point where you're left physically exhausted, which is why this title should definitely be in your PS3 bundle in March.

approaching on the right flank". All hell is breaking loose and there's no doubt you're smack in the middle of it. Never do you feel like the lone gunman plodding through a tunnel full of moving targets.

And the all-out sensory barrage never stops. Developers Treyarch are determined to maintain the intensity by eliminating loading and menu interruptions. Objective information and story elements are delivered in-game by the people around you so the game illusion is never broken. At one point our CO explains that our squad can either continue straight up and assault the enemy head on (dangerous) or go around



Launch

Classic Series Format PS3 ETA March Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Black Box

Need For Speed Carbon

⬆ High ⬆ Risk ⬆ Juiced ⬆ Cars

Turns out there's more to bending your motor than wrapping it round Burger King and running away. While everyone else concentrates on realistic crash deformation, NFS Carbon has rolled up with its own trump card – creative deformation. Instead of swapping through tons of tuning parts until you find the right bit, Carbon's car Autosculpt system lets you twist, widen, narrow, raise, lower, flare or squash each piece until it's perfect.

Canyon Duels are also new. These cliffside face-offs take place beyond the city and the interest of the cops. It's points that count not speed alone as you battle a rival down treacherous mountain

roads. Points earned in the first heat are at risk in the second. If you hit your rival or hurtle over the cliff edge then you lose your car. It's as simple, tense and harsh as that.

The aim of regular city races is to win territory (see Gang War on right), district by district. As you expand, you'll be able to recruit and train a crew who inject the racing with a tactical edge. You can only pick one per race, so must adapt your gameplan to suit your opponent's style.

The package is completed by an online bundle including a Be The Cop mode and the option to upload your dream ride, complete with stats and mods, so it can be admired by the world.

While you place cards on a board, the battles are played out in 3D fantasy arenas.

USP Make monsters out of thin air

Hold a card in front of the camera and a beast will appear in your hand.





Dev talk



"There's always the danger of pushing too hard and crashing through a barrier..."
Steve Anthony
 Producer

◀ The cops are back, but play a smaller part than in NFS Most Wanted.

5 reasons why Carbon will slam your ride



1 Pimping

You can customise everything. Using sliders to mould the cars until it's EXACTLY right. Bumpers can be reshaped, suspension lowered, wings angled, and you can even design your own wheels with custom spokes.



2 Gang war

Your mission is to take over the whole city by roaming the streets and challenging rival gangs. Once you've defeated a gang you can add its neighbourhood to your own turf. Owning a neighbourhood lets you access new shops (for car parts) and teams (for crew).



3 Crews control

Your race crew is picked from a squad of specialists. Blockers protect you and shunt rivals off course. Scouts radio in short-cuts and drafters provide slipstream speed boosts. Off-road, there are mechanics, fabricators who trick out your car, and fixers to sort cops.



4 Full tilt

You boost cornering using the Sixaxis motion control. So if you dive into a corner and hit your maximum turning circle, you can twist the pad to tighten the angle and make that mountain bend. Hopefully.

5 Fan faves

There's still a huge city to roam and all the favourite modes including Drag, and Drift – with a new rating system and slide-friendly handling.



PS3



Original Concept Format PS3 ETA March Pub Sony Dev In-house

The Eye Of Judgment

△ Cards ● Monsters ⊗ EyeToy ◻ Weird

Tap dancing down the line that separates madness from genius, this is a card battle game played using EyeToy. Like Yu-Gi-Oh! it involves turn-based combat where competing players (in the same room or online) select creatures and power-ups from their hand to fight on a 3x3 grid. The ingenious bit is that, using EyeToy, the PS3 reads a 'cybercode' on each card and makes the creatures appear on-screen as 3D entities. As a result, fighting becomes a technicolor clash of monsters and special effects, rather than simply comparing numbers Top Trumps-style.

By poking and waving your hands in front of the camera you can initiate attacks and other moves to try and dominate the board. The winner is the first person to take control of at least five squares. The game comes with 'more than 30 cards' but Sony has yet to say whether or not this starting deck can be expanded. We'd bet our hand though that additional themed card sets and downloadable monsters will be available.





Launch

Did you know?

Ray Jones Jr once played a basketball game for the Jacksonville Barracudas on the same day as a fight. Joe Frazier was legally blind in his left eye for his entire professional career – but didn't tell anyone until he retired. Filipino fighter Manny Pacquiao is mates with The Undertaker – the former WWE champ accompanied him to the ring during a 2005 fight. Ronald 'Winky' Wright has appeared in music videos by 50 Cent, Busta Rhymes and Jamie Foxx.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Electronic Arts **Dev** EA Canada



Fight Night Round 3

△ Get ⊙ In ⊗ The ◻ Ring

The new Fight Night might put you off proper violence for good. It's all thanks to the new, PS3-exclusive Get In The Ring mode, which puts you behind the eyes of your boxer. Take an uppercut and you'll be staring at the lights as your vision snaps upwards; take a hook and you'll be peering at those lights through a concussion blur. Take too much punishment and it'll seriously mess up your vision. In two-player mode, the screen splits, letting both boxers feel the pain.

Graphics now show the fighters' tendons flexing and facial expressions, and EA has also hinted at motion-sensitive Sixaxis features, enabling your boxer to duck and weave past punches. We remain, however, slightly concerned that the absence of rumble may rob Fight Night of some of its jaw-loosening impact. Nonetheless, for fans of the noble art, this is that rarest of sports simulations: accessible and deep.



Blowing off

The PS3's extra-sensitive analogues mean you'll be able to judge your punches perfectly.

Visible Bruising

How much more can he take? Visible facial bruising lets you read the pain in your opponent's face.

Sopping film

Boxers start the match dry, but swiftly build up a sopping film as the rounds take their toll.

The characters No Tyson, but it's still a heavy-hitting line-up



The roster's the same as the PS2 version, and includes greats like Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones Jr.



There's no sign of Vladimir Klitschko or current WBC heavyweight champ Oleg Maskaev, but the lighter weights are stuffed with talent, from Arturo Gatti to Winky Wright.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Codemasters **Dev** In-house

Colin McRae DIRT

Ⓐ Muddy Ⓞ Bloody ✕ Rally Ⓚ Rebuilt

The new McRae is more than just a face lift for the series. Everything in the game has been rebuilt to make the rally ride more immersive, and we're not just talking about licensed circuits and realistic car handling. The crowds react like real people, there are different species of grass in the off-road areas, 3D trees sway realistically in the breeze, mud builds up on the car's bodywork, the interior of each vehicle is modelled in as much detail as the exterior – the list goes on. Here are DIRT's most impressive new tricks...

Friends like these

Commentary and car analysis comes from Colin's Subaru teammate, Travis Pastrana.

Doing a ton

DIRT will support up to 100 racers per session, online. Players will race an entire rally, stage by stage. You win the session by having the lowest cumulative time when all the stages have been raced – just like the real thing.

Airplay

DIRT's smartest piece of tech is its wind system. Like physics for air, it'll blow dust across the track, and drive rain at angles. Replays look lush as the airflow over your spoiler creates tiny dust devils in your wake.

Dev talk



"DIRT will raise the off-road bar for PS3."

Gavin Raeburn
Executive Producer

Bump 'n' grind

The track is now much tougher on tyres with extra PS3 power available to model features such as potholes, puddles, road markings, grates, drains, piles of leaves, rumble strips and cracks in the tarmac.

Caught in action

Hostile terrain puts the cars through their paces



All the cars in the game are fully licensed. The pick of the bunch? We're tempted by the Pikes Peak Tacoma, but the Subaru Impreza WRX (far right) remains our 'go to' rally ride.



Pans-Dakar-style desert races feature for the first time in a Colin McRae game. They join the straight rally championships, Hill Climb and Rallycross events from previous outings.



▲ The Darkwalker tripods are fully driveable and can bend down to blast into bunkers.

Hyper Magazine Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Midway Dev Epic

Unreal Tournament 2007

△ Sci-fi ○ Shoulder Pad × Gilet □ Annihilation

Honed for years on PC, Unreal is the classic online shooter. Frenzied yet almost balletic deathmatches are graced by beautiful weapon balancing, taut level design and the grim satisfaction that every kill is a real human chowing your lead in Blubbersville, Arkansas.

Every Unreal is slightly different but the PS3 version is hot for war machines. Some drive, some fly, all are heavily armed with lasers, homing rockets, shields and

■ Necris vehicles are piloted by goth-looking, undead humans.

anti-missile chaff. The neo-death, pro-industrial battlefields are consequently enormous, so you have a hoverboard for personal travel – you can't fight from it, but you can do tricks. This should at least look funny as, say, a five-seater tank called a Leviathan morphs into a scenery-shattering uber-gun and melts you mid-fingerflip. Debris won't fade away either – destruction can be used tactically.

Then there's the graphics, which are clearly incredible. The world awaits.



▲ Epic claims they'll release software enabling players to produce their own UT mods for PS3.

Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Anna Larke Games Designer

Resident Evil 5

"Resi 4 was my favourite game last year, and this is apparently going to use a similar gameplay style. So it should be incredibly atmospheric and frightening,



particularly as the trailer suggests the enemies can now run."

Grand Theft Auto IV

"I've seen the GTA series go from the original PlayStation to the PS2, and loved every new instalment. (Vice City being the best, obviously.) I'm sure Rockstar is pulling out all the stops for the next-gen version, particularly as 2006 is the 10th anniversary of the series. I feel old now :)"

Final Fantasy XIII



"Final Fantasy is probably my favourite RPG series. Square Enix knows how to produce a polished game that's great to play, gorgeous to look at and has an excellent score. FFXIII uses the 'White Engine', their exclusive new graphics engine – I can't wait to see it."

Dev talk



"We have the best weapons... everybody wants a Flak Cannon"
Mark Rein Epic VP





Launch

Small PS3 Rape Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal

Assassin's Creed

△ Kill ○ Climb × Run □ Hide

The motto here is 'hide within plain sight'. If medieval killer Altair wants to reach his VIP target, he must cross a bustling plaza and slip past numerous armed guards. The trick is to use Social Stealth. It's the art of blending in with a crowd to move unnoticed and striking your victim without them ever realising you were there. But what happens to 'discreet' when you kill a man in front of hundreds of people? Find out how to kill, and get away with it, the old fashioned way...

Quick pitch

Hot cross fun

War is raging between the Crusaders and Saracens for control of medieval Jerusalem.

VIP slaughter

You're a cowl'd hitman bumping off leaders on both sides to suit your sinister masters.

Do it in style

Climb anything and leap across rooftops like an Olympic athlete.

056



1

Take a stab at it

Your target is a leading Crusader currently conducting a public execution atop the gallows ahead. Time to move in...



2

In with the crowd

You evade the gaze of a suspicious guard by pretending to make conversation with a nearby stranger. A passing group of monks then provides the mobile cover you need to dodge the guards entirely. By bowing his head and pretending to prey, Altair blends in perfectly.



3

Shed your cloak

Within the crowd, Altair has two choices. At first, he moves slowly, gently brushing people aside, attracting minimal attention. But with his goal in sight, stealth is forgotten and he shoves people flying to reach his goal.

4

A quick death

The target is quickly dispatched with a thrust to the neck from the assassin's signature weapon – a concealed, spring-loaded blade, attached to his wrist.

5

Leap of faith

With the alarm raised it's time to get away. Fortunately, every ledge can be climbed on, meaning Altair can scale the walls and windowsills of the ramshackle houses to make a flamboyant rooftop escape.

6

Time to die

Fighting is happily unavoidable – the combat system involves timing and anticipation, rather than hammering the 'slice him up' button. By parrying blows and waiting for an opportunity, Altair can step past a guard's defences and drive home a fatal blow.



Launch

Classic Series Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal

Rainbow Six: Vegas

△ Sin ○ City × Psycho □ Slotting

The Free World's favourite anti-terrorist SWAT unit is back to offer pincer moves a-go-go and a tasty slice of tactical combat action for PS3. We're talking flushing out the evil-doers in taut hostage situations that require brain as well as firepower.

You have just two squadmates: the demolitions and heavy weapons expert, and the recon and hacking guy. You plan, you prowl, you scope rooms using the light-pipe. The joint is jumping with freedom-haters so you assign your men targets using the joystick buttons. They kick in one door, you breach another and perform a text-book dual entry assault.

Cover is dynamic: a pull of a shoulder trigger zooms the game to a third-person view as you duck down. You can

fire blindly over obstacles to keep bad guys pinned down, or lean out to lob frag, smoke and flash grenades. Sneaky goons trying to outflank your position, eh? Just release the trigger button to move and dish out some justice.

Solo mode plays out over 24 terrorist-filled hours with on-the-fly objectives, while multiplayer offers team and individual modes including Sharpshooter, Attack & Defend, Retrieval and Survival, plus a split-screen two-player and online co-op. There's even a comprehensive character and face creation system so everyone can pick you out. Cynics can point to the last appalling outing by the Rainbow gang on PS2. But Xbox versions have been great, and the new PS3 edition looks astonishing. Of course.

▲ The Royal Hotel's 'no re-admission' policy was harsh but fair.



■ The cutesy cast belie the fierce challenge on offer.



Classic Series Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Clap Hanz

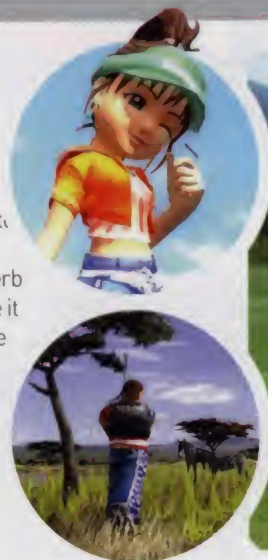
Everybody's Golf 5

△ Massively ○ Online × Arcade □ Cute

The long-running Everybody's Golf is the type of game that's fun whether you care about the subject or not. Its cheerful, anime kid-adult characters and bright blue skies remain, though now beautifully hi-res and detailed. Better still, long grass, water hazards, smooth greens and rough are all brilliantly rendered. The same goes for the special effects: from the rainbow trails and churning ropes of flame created by a good thwack of the ball, to

the grin and dance your golfer does after holing a monster putt.

The series has always boasted superb gameplay, so the developers will leave it relatively untouched. Which makes the fifth outing all about the online mode. Our spies suggest massively multiplayer 18-hole courses filled with people all playing happily together. You'll also be able to spectate and take part in big real-time tournaments.



Key ingredients of Rainbow Six: Vegas



1 Planning co-ordinated attacks.



2 'Tagging' people so your team take out the right enemies.



3 Abseiling through windows.

✓ The setting is a typically lavish Japanese fantasy world full of bizarre wildlife.



Original Concept Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Gaia

Unknown Realms

Ⓐ Enchanting Ⓢ Spirits ✕ Boy/Girl Ⓢ Ghostbusters

Rather than saving a kidnap-prone princess or protecting ungrateful hicks from an ancient evil, this action RPG sets gamers a more lofty goal – solving the mystery of death itself. ("No problem, should have it done by lunch.") You can either play as a floaty-skirted student called Elene or a speccy journalist named Keats.

Playing the game in Japanese means the plot remains a beautiful mystery, but following a brief chitchat with a scarecrow (dressed in a Union Jack shirt, *obviously*) you're suddenly transformed into some sort of freelance spellslinger and packed off into an ominous-looking forest.

The environments, while spectacularly pretty, are unremittably linear in the

sense that you're funnelled from one area to the next. Combat revolves around defeating monsters and capturing their spirits, which then enables you to use their special ability – breathing fire in the case of the floaty blue pufferfish we punctured.

Unknown Realm's most interesting aspect is its use of the Sixaxis pad.

Once a target is weakened a mini-game is activated in which your character traps the monster with a Ghostbusters-style beam. You

have to yank the pad left and right (in accordance with on-screen arrows) before performing a sharp upward motion to wrestle out the living soul from the body of the beast. It's too easy at present, but still a refreshingly different use of Sony's motion-control pad.



✓ The better your drive, the more flamboyant the special effects.



Where The Hell Is? Pro Evo on PS3

360 exclusive? Say it ain't so...

For the straight facts on the supposedly 'Xbox exclusive' PES7, we talked to the game's creator, Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka. Seabass explained: "When we said a year exclusivity what we meant was the calendar year, so till the end of 2006. Microsoft took it as one year [12 months from release] so there was major confusion. Of course, in theory, if we release PES7 [on PS3] next year [in the regular release spot of October] they will have had one year exclusivity for one year in Europe." So maybe no new PES for a year. Unless you get PS3's Winning Eleven 11 from Japan in the spring (there's no regional lockout on PS3!) Seabass also hinted that the Sixaxis' tilt functions could be used for dribbling and feinting in upcoming PS3 versions.



Launch

▶ If there's a cooler way to make an entrance, we've yet to see it.



Original Concept Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Factor 5

Lair

⬆ Scaly ⬆ Scorching ✕ Swoopy □ Hates Hobbits

Playing Lair feels like waking up to find yourself trapped inside the cover of a prog-metal album. The plot remains under wraps but all you really need to know is that you get to ride dragons, using PS3's Sixaxis motion control to swoop around, dogfight with other angry lizards and barbecue rivals with napalm breath.

Developer Factor 5 is best known for its Rogue Squadron series of Star Wars games, which mix intuitive flight controls with exciting battles against swarms of enemy. Lair pulls off the same trick to even more impressive effect, with PS3 delivering sweeping mountain ranges, glittering oceans and hundreds of

armour-clad maniacs fighting on a crumbling bridge. It's a sight for sore eyes, but the real fight is in your hands.

Dragon jockeys

Adapting to motion control is initially awkward (as you undo years of learning) but you get used to it remarkably quickly. Banking left and right with the joypad, tilting forward for a speed burst and changing altitude by moving up or down soon becomes second nature.

Homing in on an enemy dragon, you soften him up with a stream of fireballs. Then you're locked into vicious tooth 'n' claw combat like two cats in a bag. Weaken your foe and you can break off to

perform a kill move. That means pulling off a button combo on the pad then sitting back to enjoy one of several flashy finishing sequences. In one very cool instance, we saw our rider braining the enemy dragon before jumping off to be collected in mid-air by his scaly pal.

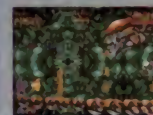
Once you rule the skies, it's time to wade into the ground war. Al armies do battle on their own but you can tip the scales – boosting the morale of friendly troops by scorching their opponents.

Lair is lots of fun with plenty of scope for 'look darling, I'm in Lord Of The Rings' moments. The motion control is excellent but plenty of work still needs to be done on marrying up the various elements.



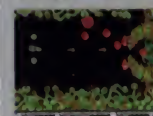
▶ You'd dress like this too if your ride to work could eat you.

Also by Factor 5



Super Turrican

(SNES, 1993)
Massive levels and a remixed baritone. Worth of enemies in this ultra-tight 2D shooter.



Katakis

(Amiga, 1998)
Factor 5 admits it's 'very reminiscent' of R-Type. Check out www.factor5.com/downloads.shtml



Star Wars: Rogue Squadron II

(GameCube, 2001)
The Force is all kinds of strong thanks to the intuitive flying action. For once, the Star Wars licence wasn't wasted.

How it works Like One Man And His Dog, only with a massive dragon



Aerial combat

At close quarters dragons bite, scratch and flame their way to victory. Smooth Sixaxis movements trigger sideswipes while a violent yank prompts a ram. Swoop in closer and you can flick the pad to perform a flying bodyslam. Shake it, and your dragon will tear into his scaly rivals.



Ground attacks

Land your reptile amid the warring armies and get stuck into the little people. Once again the Sixaxis motion control comes into its own. Slam the pad to stomp, or shake it to munch a mouthful of men. Fire-breathing is button-based, but you sweep the pad to aim the flame.

VIDEOGAME CULTURE

EDGE[®]

NINTENDO | SONY | MICROSOFT | PC | PORTABLE | COIN-OP | SET-TOP | ONLINE



PlayStation 3
in black and white

Edge 170: on sale November 23, with exclusive PS3 supplement

Launch

Things go a bit Scanners early doors, and it only gets nastier.

FD Converter | **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Vivendi **Dev** Day 1/Monolith Productions

F.E.A.R.

Ⓐ Agony Ⓞ Assault ⊗ Disfigurement ◻ Terror

The story goes like this: the F.E.A.R. (First Encounter Assault Recon) special forces team – is called in when a deranged psychic by the name of Paxton Fettel invades a future-tech arms maker called ATC. His goal is to assume control of an army of clone soldiers, and bend them to his will like gun-wielding string puppets. As a new member of the elite F.E.A.R. squad, it's down to you to neutralise the threat. And it all goes wrong from there.

Fettel attacks you and your troops with a series of traumatic psychic visions, and it's this reality-warping torment that marks F.E.A.R. out from the FPS pack. We're not talking a bit 'dark and scary', but proper terror: corridors awash with

blood, trigger-twitching shadows and woozy time-lapse hallucinations of evil children.

New to the PS3 version is a mode called Instant Action. It's a faff-free rampage, the aim being to score as many kills as you can in the shortest time possible. And speaking of hectic destruction, we loved the PS3-exclusive weapon – a rapid-fire shotgun called the SPAS-12. This massively mutilating firearm made bleeding pulp out of everything we pointed it at.

At its core, F.E.A.R. is a technically outstanding shooter with balanced

controls and satisfying, substantial weapons. There's also a bullet time-style slo-mo device. Okay it's not revolutionary, but the effect is stunning as the screen fills with watery bullet trails and detailed debris. No amount of impressive guns and abilities will stop F.E.A.R. from spooking you, though. The jittery supernatural effects transform the game from a simple 'shooter' to something more akin to survival horror. Still, at least you're part of a team. After you then...

Hyper Magnet | **Format** PS3 **ETA** March 2007 **Pub** Sega **Dev** Team Sonic

Sonic The Hedgehog

Ⓐ Retro Ⓞ Speed ⊗ Spinning ◻ Rings

Sonic is 15 this year, and developer Team Sonic is trying to recapture the hog's glory days. This is retro Sonic with a new twist – warp-speed levels that weave through a 3D world creating track-like courses that can be blitzed at high velocity.

As you hurtle forwards the camera automatically turns to show routes and enemies, but it's currently a flawed system. Unless you're prepared for sudden changes in view, you can be left looking at floors, walls, or sky if you don't adjust quickly. It doesn't help that the controls are overly sensitive either. Sonic's homing attack is also causing problems and can far too easily fling you down the nearest bottomless drop. There's still time to fix these failings and the other characters are less flawed to begin with. There's Silver, a telepathic time-travelling hedgehog, and Shadow, an amnesiac gun-toting bad-guy-turned-good. Sega has also revealed Tails, Amy and Blaze as playable characters. It's just a shame that the hero's a bit of a letdown.



Key ingredients of F.E.A.R.



1 Lots of shooting.



2 Scary The Grudge-style kids.



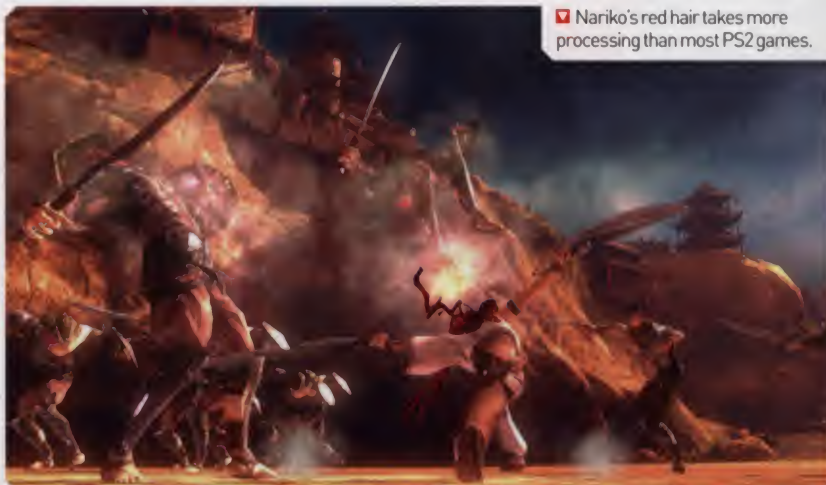
3 Inexplicable, gruesome brain-based fatalities.



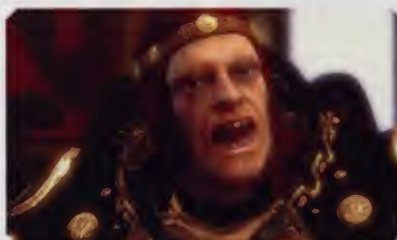
4 Loads of doomed soldiers.



✓ Princess Elise is Sonic's new romantic interest.



✓ Nariko's red hair takes more processing than most PS2 games.



The Next... God Of War Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Sony Dev Ninja Theory

Heavenly Sword

⊕ Swords ⊙ Combat ⊗ Sex ⊕ Death

Everyone you've ever loved has been murdered, you've only got a handful of hours left to live but, hey, you've got *great* hair. This is Nariko, the only survivor of a clan dedicated to protecting the Heavenly Sword. This divine blade bestows incredible powers on mortals, but also drains their life force until they die. So Nariko's up against the clock as she takes up the sword to avenge her dead clan.

Imagine a less bald and far sexier Kratos from God Of War and you've got Heavenly Sword's vibe pretty much nailed.

The fighting is combo-based, with elegantly flowing attack sequences that mix sword-play with Matrix-style martial arts. Your sword is actually two blades that can be joined together or used separately, creating three distinct fighting styles. The power stance uses one large blade to chop bosses and smash tough defences. Speed stance is a blade in each hand – ideal for one-on-ones. Range stance extends the blades on chains. It's weak but can be used to whip up a whirl of debris that keeps attackers at bay when you're surrounded.



Motives What's on Nariko's mind?

Revenge

Her friends slaughtered by evil King Botan (Andy Serkis of Gollum/King Kong fame), Nariko grabs the Heavenly Sword to seek vengeance.

Why don't I just use the big gun?

One of Nariko's other weapons is a massive bazooka capable of wasting large groups of foes.

A sense of her own mortality

While the Heavenly Sword gives anyone who holds it superhuman abilities it also kills them within hours.

Does my bum look big in this?

Despite using scissor kicks and split jumps, Nariko wears an outfit consisting of net curtains and string.





Launch

PlayStation Icon Format PS3 ETA March 2007 Pub Activision Dev Neversoft Entertainment

Tony Hawk's Project 8

Ⓐ Flip Ⓑ Grind Ⓐ Knees Ⓐ Smash

A step backwards is often a bad thing. But in this case it's a breath of fresh air. Gone are the frantic stunts, the object-crammed environments and gameplay that got faster and more frenzied with each instalment. Instead, Project 8 is more like the original Tony Hawk's Pro Skater – more open environments, more room to string together combos and some enormously rewarding lines to discover.

It's more like *real* skating than the arcadey button-mashing of its predecessor American Wasteland. There's a greater sense of weight, flow and artistry to the skating as you glide through the terrain, working out routes and tricks. And with three difficulty levels, each with their own endings, you get to decide how hard you want to hit the half-pipe.

Even falling off is an artform. Not only are your spills scored according to the hospital costs it takes to fix you up, but there's a Bail Contest mini-game that challenges you to smash yourself up as much as possible – think Burnout's slow-mo Aftertouch system. There's also a mini-game called Puzzle Goals, where you have to trick across certain areas, without touching the floor. The challenge comes from arranging a set number of obstacles to trick over first.

One odd touch is that the open-plan levels (a mix of classic and new locations) look like a patchwork quilt with a visible line in the ground separating each area. The school level is *here*, the suburbs begin *there* – it's no game breaker, though. The story, however, is more familiar: objectives to complete, stunts to pull off, people to help – the overall aim being to rise through the ranks, and become one of eight newbies chosen to join Hawk's crew.

2 Hang time
Using the pad you can spin, tilt and flip the board in any direction you like. You're essentially freestyling your own trick. And you can do it anywhere, even mid-combo.

1 Take off
The new Nail The Trick mode enables you to perform stunts by directly manipulating the board with your feet. It's activated, once you're airborne, by clicking both analogue sticks.

3 Down to Earth
The secret to landing the trick is to stop the skateboard with the grip tape underfoot. Get it wrong – either by coming down on the wrong part of the board, or spinning it off into space – and there will be pain. Lots of it.

Did you know?

Tony's full name is Anthony Frank Hawk. Secret characters in previous titles have included Jango Fett, Darth Maul, Spider-Man, Wolverine, Billie Joe from Green Day and the rapper Lil' Jon. The original Tony Hawk's prototype was a racing game. New skaters in Project 8 include the 12-year-old Nyjah Huston and 17-year-old Lyn-Z Adams Hawkins.

Realism Tiny tweaks that make all the difference



You can still knock over or attack other people but now they hold a grudge, chasing after you if you annoy them.



The skating feels more physical this time as you must build up momentum for tricks using gravity and ramps.



Launch Game Round-Up

Preparing for the big PS3 push



Alone in the Dark

ETA March Pub Atari Dev Eden Studios

Monster-buster Edward Carnby returns to rout an unknown evil from Central Park. The story unfolds in 40-minute chapters, like a TV show, complete with intros to recap 'the story so far' and cliffhanger endings. An interesting experiment in horror.



Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway

ETA March Pub Ubisoft Dev Gearbox Software

Take control as the leader of a WW2 American squad desperately battling Nazis in a shooter that blends strategy elements with absolute carnage. Now with new units, like bazooka squads, to order to their doom.



The Darkness

ETA March Pub 2K Games Dev Starbreeze Studios

Enter the shadowy world of Jackie Estacado, a Mafioso who controls 'The Darkness'. It's an ancient power that enables Jackie to spout demonic tentacles and control packs of sinister demons as he hunts down the mobsters that betrayed him.



Marvel: Ultimate Alliance

ETA March Pub Activision Dev Raven Software

Control a pack of superheroes in this action RPG-lite featuring Marvel celebrities like Spidey, Wolverine and The Thing, along with who-the-hell Z-listers such as Ymir and Fin Fang Foom (140 characters in all).



Fatal Inertia

ETA March Pub KOEI Dev KOEI Canada

No PlayStation launch would be complete without a jet-propelled, Wipeout-style future racer. High-speed combat and suicidal, supersonic runs through mountain canyons are all present and correct.



Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom

ETA March Pub Sony Dev In-house

A hack-and-slasher with more than a whiff of the D&D universe, Dark Kingdom sees you wielding large weapons and powerful magic on a quest to rid the land of a corrupt King.

There's more...

While some driving games focus on destroying the car, **Sega Rally Revo** runs the track, making each lap harder as you negotiate the ruts, wreckage and holes of a course that deteriorates as you race. There's also some vehicular destruction to be had with **Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII** as you battle for air supremacy in some of the most intense encounters of the war, from the Battle of Britain to Pearl Harbour.

Pro Evo might be missing from PS3 right now but we can always look forward to a kickabout with **FIFA**. Expect an increased number of leagues from its current six plus online updates to the players' database. For the more violent sportsman, prepare to clash sticks in 2K Game's **NHL 2K7** ice hockey game. There's a range of single-player, multiplayer and online options to pucker with, plus a great use of the Sixaxis controller where you can shake it left or right to barge into opponents.

Not everything at launch will be in the shops, though. The low cost **e-Distribution Games** will be available online from the PlayStation Store. You download them straight to your PS3's hard drive and the range currently includes: the ambient, creature-eating experience of **Flow**; frantic retro shooter **Blast Factor**; classic suicide prevention fest **Lemmings 2**; **Go Sudoku** and block puzzler **Swizzleblocks**. And finally, there's **Wheel Of Fortune**, **GripShift** and **CraSh Carnage Chao\$ DLX**.



Half-Life 2

ETA March Pub Electronic Arts Dev Valve

Gordon Freeman, bearded hero of the award-winning PC shooter, makes his PS3 debut spilling alien juice and saving the world. We'll also get new story chapters (Episodes 1 and 2), Portal (an innovative puzzler based around teleportation and the physics manipulation gun) and the online multiplayer sequel Team Fortress 2. All bundled on one shiny disc.



▶ The sinister G-Man (top) manipulates you like a pawn, but Alyx is definitely a friend – save her!

feature

Burnout 5

I wanted to

De



PS
066

story

something beautiful

...so the best place to head was Criterion Games, for an ultra-exclusive look at how **Burnout 5** is set to use the unprecedented power of PlayStation 3



PS
067

▼ This early concept shot gives a taster of the visual quality you can expect from Burnout 5.



▼ The cars will each feature 80 destructible parts, compared to 12-per-car in the Xbox 360 version of Burnout Revenge.



The quote is from *Fight Club*. It reads: "I wanted to destroy something beautiful". Someone has printed it out and put it on the wall of Criterion's Guildford office, where it's surrounded by aerial photographs of lethal-looking road junctions harvested from Google Maps. In the book, the narrator goes on to say, "I wanted to kill all the fish I couldn't afford to eat, and smother the French beaches I'd never see... I really wanted to put a bullet between the eyes of every endangered panda that wouldn't screw to save its species." To which the Burnout team would doubtless add, "...and I wanted to see a sporty little hatchback torn in two by a huge lorry."

The quote isn't just about the Burnout developer's desire to see pretty things smashed up. It's also a reminder that Criterion likes to foster a rebel spirit. Its games are noisy, aggressive and mainstream. Anything that isn't immediately exciting is rejected. So while the rest of the world was farming herbs in *World Of Warcraft*, Criterion was making *Black*, a shooter with no online mode that was inspired by the most violent of Arnie's '80s films. And when the company was bought by EA in 2004, rather than worry about being seen as sell-outs, they rejoiced at the chance to make even more noisy, aggressive and mainstream games.

So now, with Sony facing more criticism than at any time since it entered the console business, it's no surprise to discover

"Teams that aced it on PS2 are going to be the ones to shine on PS3."

that Criterion is staunchly pro-PS3. "We are PlayStation specialists," says creative director, Alex Ward. "We are sitting here today because Sony made PlayStation 2. Otherwise, there would be no Burnout." He's joined by Hamish Young, producer on Burnout 5. Both are disappointed by the negativity currently directed towards PS3. "No one's talking about how powerful this box really is," says Young. "Don't forget that people used to complain that PS2 was hard to develop for. What I think you're going to find is that those teams that aced it on PS2 are also going to be the ones to shine on PS3."

Speed thrills

Burnout 5 is set to be a poster child for the power of PS3. "We basically decided to throw everything out and start again," says Young, "because we want to deliver a truly next-gen game." On the day of our visit the cars exist in a world that's grey and untextured (the images accompanying this piece represent the level of visual quality the team expects to achieve) but needless to say, it looks suicidally fast. The most obvious change is the crashes. Already wince-inducing, in Burnout 5 the force of impact is on a par with one of the government's anti-speed

Inspirations

Star Wars Episode I pod race sequence

The only good bit in the clunkiest of the clunky prequels – the roar of the turbines and the hyper-detailed way Anakin's engine shatters make this scene a key Burnout reference



C'Etait Un Rendezvous

Claude Lelouch's insane '70s film about caning around Paris at illegal speeds. Since rumbled as a fake (the engine sounds are dubbed, he doesn't actually go over 85mph), it's still cool. youtube.com/watch?v=GzWuMXk9GSI



Russian tunnel

Russian drivers try (and fail) to negotiate a stupidly icy, stretch of tunnel. The obvious tragedy is undercut by the use of pounding dance music. youtube.com/watch?v=1CMxTVLdceowatch?v=GzWuMXk9GSI





Criterion is modelling the inside of the cars for the first time, so the camera can cut inside for that extra 'my beautiful spine' drama.

warning films. To demonstrate, we're shown several videos. The first has a muscle car ploughing into a concrete wall in pornographic slo-mo. As it hits, the bonnet concertinas, the wheels buckle, airbags pop and a shockwave ripples through the chassis making every pane of glass explode. "This is next-gen, so we have to make you completely believe in the crashes," shouts Ward, over the sound of wrenching metal and tinkling glass. "Now we've got the power to really do that. It's why you buy our game and we'd be deficient - it'd be irresponsible of us - if we didn't do that."

Time for a numerical interlude. The cars in previous Burnouts had three destructible areas: front, middle and back. For Burnout 5, Criterion is modelling 80 different parts, all of which are wrrenched, scorched and crushed in real-time. Bear in mind that's with up to 60 cars on-screen at once, and with visuals locked at a super-stable 60 frames-per-second. The cars also have fully designed interiors but, like its predecessors, Burnout 5 doesn't offer a conventional in-car view. Instead, when a crash occurs (ie often) the camera jump-cuts between angles, including the interior one, to capture that disorientating



The impact of every crash is generated on-the-fly, using real physics.



In this case the on-rushing truck tears the car in two.



Note the enhanced particle effects used to scatter glass and debris.

Create-a-crash

See the new damage system in action



"Mind that enormous grey block!" This video shows a head-on impact...



...the bonnet wangs up, the doors burst open and the windshield explodes.



The shockwave tears through the car - check out the popped airbag!



The damage to the car will differ depending on the strength of force applied.

feature

Burnout 5



'Christ-I'm-cartwheeling-along-in-a-big-metal-coffin' vibe. Creating sound that's as dramatic as the visuals is also critical. The Cell chip (essentially PS3's brain) comprises seven Synergistic Processing Elements, which are each around five times as powerful as a whole PS2. Criterion is dedicating one of these elements entirely to audio, which is generated in real-time and therefore integrates properly with the visuals of each crash.

Completely trucked

The second video we see is the real deal-sealer. It opens on the same cherry red muscle car. This time, an articulated lorry appears from nowhere and hits the side flush, instantly tearing the car in two in a shower of debris. (Meanwhile, in Japan, the Gran Turismo team sheds a silent tear.) To prove this isn't all just some pre-rendered hokum, we're shown multiple impacts with the same enormous force applied to different areas of the car. Each time, the result is different but always spectacular.

"Other developers are focusing on what they can't do, but we *can* do it."

If this was all there was to Burnout 5 – bigger, prettier crashes – it would probably be enough. But there's tons more. First up, there's the Sixaxis pad's motion-sensing capabilities. The most obvious application is during impact time – the seconds after a crash during which you can guide your ruined car into the path of rival racers. This feature used to be controlled using the analogue stick, but now you can steer just by tilting the pad. There are other potential uses too, like side-swiping parallel opponents with a sudden jerk of the pad.

Then there's the new PS3 camera. The idea is that when you're playing online and take out a rival racer, it will flash a snap of your jubilant face up on your opponent's screen. The shift to free-roaming is another first for the series. Burnout 5 will be set in Paradise City, an enormous sprawl comprising farmland, industrial areas, lake shores, a downtown district and possibly an airport. The aim will be to obtain your Burnout



Got the time?

The shift from individual tracks to an entire city brings with it a full day/night cycle. Note the deep shadows, bloom lighting and hazy depth-of-field effects.

A new world order

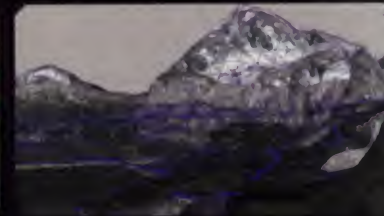
How the Burnout world is being rebuilt

Feeling wired

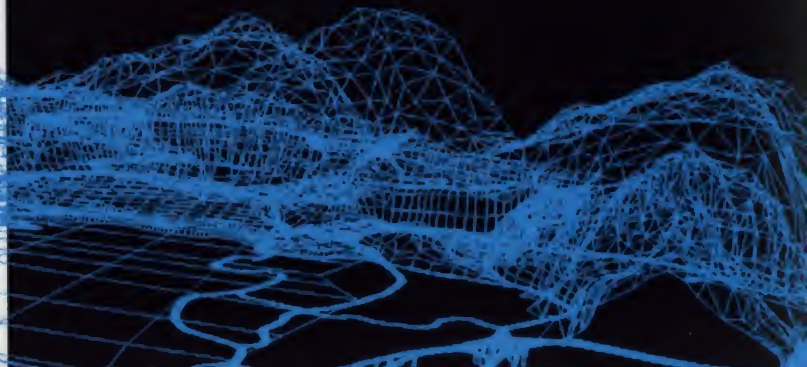
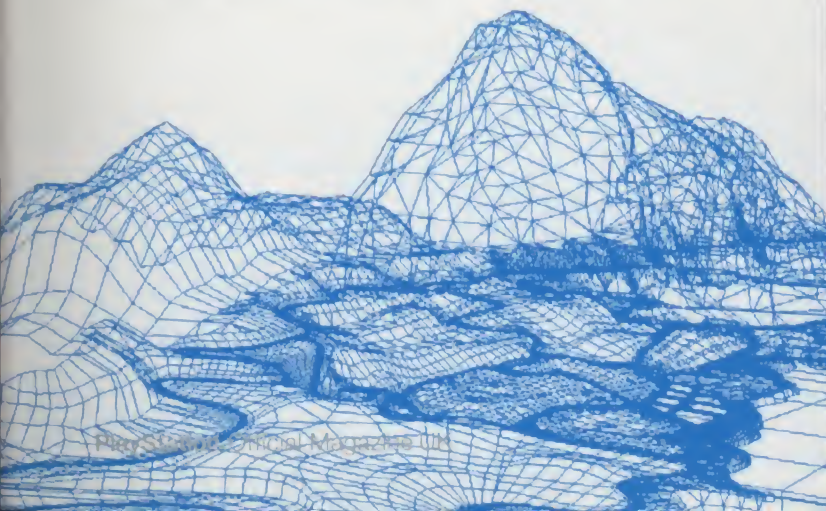
You'll be free to explore all of Paradise City – Burnout 5's fictional home – from the start. The game world spans many different environment types.



PS3's next-gen power enables Paradise City to be built on an awe-inspiring scale.



Create your own race routes, heading from the city centre up into the mountains.





Criterion's motor mouths, from left producer Hamish Young and creative director Alex Ward. "We are the Scorpions in Grease," says Ward. "Our cars shit fire." Cinematic references abound. The bridge below is on loan from The French Connection, while the plan is to make crashes that capture the flashiness of The Matrix Reloaded and The Island.

licence by creating as much chaos as possible. This is Burnout, so you won't have to worry about the law's long arm – although there is a '70s cop car to unlock if you fancy bullying the locals. Races and other events are triggered at the lights or at key buildings. Intriguingly, Criterion is also planning for players to create their own routes around the cityscape which will then be made available for others to join from an online lobby.

The network element is clearly more important this time, and the overall vision is to make it feel like a bar room brawl on wheels. So the game will track relationships between groups of friends, keeping a record of who's ruined who. Another idea is to allow players to meet pre-race and secretly agree to gang up on one person (who will get a performance boost to compensate).

Chrome sweet chrome

Criterion seems happiest at times like these – with the final design in flux and new hardware limits to stretch. "Being world class is always really hard," says Ward. "Our industry is the Olympics. These changes come every four years or so. And the Olympics are really difficult, right? The bar gets raised every time. People get faster. But instead we seem to focus on the people who are fat and overweight and couldn't get to the Olympics. They couldn't get to the Olympics last time, let alone this time – and yet everyone's going, 'Oh, is the PS3 hard to program for?' Of course it is. It was always going to be harder. Irrespective of hardware, games are changing, games are

evolving, games are getting more complicated in terms of building them. There are more people playing than ever before. The stage is set. It's never been more exciting. Other developers are focusing on what they can't do, but we can do it." Noisy, aggressive, mainstream. That's the Criterion way. The developer's other hallmark, of course, is the ability to squeeze more performance out of Sony hardware than almost any other team working outside of Japan. We know this, because we've seen it. On the way out, we notice another quote on the wall. This one reads: "Mediocrity is a sin."

Rather than copying a particular US location, Paradise City features a patchwork of recognisably American locales. Among its districts are slums, a gleaming downtown, mountain trails and a beside airport.



PARADISE CITY



Phil Harrison on PS3

We sat down with the president of Sony's Worldwide Studios to talk UK launch, online strategy and when we can expect to see Killzone

First things first, will PS3 definitely hit the March launch window for Europe?

Given that all of our previous statements about launching in Europe simultaneously with the US and Japan turned out not to be the case, I would not like to make any definitive statements on that. It's not my job to comment on hardware supply issues other than to say some very smart people are working very hard to catch up. In fact, the ramp up is already starting to happen in supply and output, just obviously too late for us to have launched in Europe at the same time as in the US.

Is there a risk that there might be a log-jam of games coming out in March, as Europe catches up with the US?

Definitely not a log jam. The benefits for the European consumer will hopefully be greater hardware supply and definitely more games available on day one. We saw this on PSP, there were a wider selection of games. In game development terms March is not really that different from November.

So how many games do you expect to see from day one in the UK?

In the US we'll have 22 disc-based games out between 17 November and the end of December. Some of the American sports titles may not all make it to Europe and they will be replaced with titles that are not going to launch in that window in the US. So I think day one we'll see something in the order of 25 titles. I would be surprised if it was more than 30.

What kind of deals are you aiming to make with music and video providers for the PlayStation Store?

One of the strongest attributes of the PlayStation Store is that it's an open environment. It's interesting that you ask what 'deals' we are doing. We want other companies to provide their own content on the store through our commerce mechanism. Day one is clearly going to be more game-centric, but over time that will expand to music, film, television. Any digital content can be distributed this way.

Using the PS3 browser, can I visit any site - say Apple's trailer page or a music blog - and download files?

No. It has to be done through the Store. Although it's built on the same technology as the open internet browser, it's a special version. That's completely understandable from a DRM [digital rights management] point of view. But some streaming sites, such as music on MySpace, will work.

Is it a protection thing?

It's also just a functionality thing. The Store is the place where we'll aggregate content and make it available for download.

How can you guarantee the regular flow of new downloadable content?

You can imagine a game starting with a trailer to drive a bit of anticipation and to get people excited about it. Not dissimilar to the strategy where you'd see a preview in the magazine linked to content on a disc. There is a role for linking your editorial to these kind of materials.

"The European consumer will hopefully benefit from greater hardware supply"

interview

Phil Harrison on PS3



interview

Phil Harrison on PS3

Have you decided whether you're going to charge for playable demos on the PlayStation Store?

At the moment we have no plans to charge for them, but never say never. It's not on the cards at the moment.

Is there a risk in making the online service so open-ended and flexible, that it may also become disjointed?

You have to think of it in terms of AOL, as it was, versus the open internet. Where has all the innovation been in the last five years? Clearly it's in the open internet and we want to adopt similar philosophies to expand our offering. Having a standard browser free of charge is so important because it joins up the gameplay experience, the commerce experience and the community experience. They are all built into the same functionality and that's vital for PS3's future.

Are you happy with the number of games that are exclusive to PS3?

I'm delighted because we're launching with a stronger line-up of first-party titles than we had

one means you will buy a PS3. If you are a first-person shooter fan it's going to be Resistance: Fall Of Man. If you are more of a cerebral player it might be Untold Legends, or it might be Motorstorm if you're more of an action and exhilaration fan. I think there's something for everybody in there. The games are outstanding quality and I think will satisfy.

PS1 saw the shift to 3D, PS2 had the explosion of free-roaming games after GTAA... what changes do you expect PS3 to trigger?

You can see sparks of change in individual games today. On the visual side, there's full 1080p HD and what that means. You can see the artificial intelligence side of things in F1 and especially Resistance. You can start to see games doing some more interesting and unpredictable things on the physics side – particularly the kind of chaotic experience you get with Motorstorm. You can join those dots together and start to see how game development trends are going to be influenced. It's understandable why, day one, there isn't a

benefits and therefore more value to the player than a vibrating pad could ever do. Saying that, I don't believe we've got definitive examples of how great it could be yet, but we're close.

If, further down the line, there was a way of marrying the two technologies, would Sony consider it?

No, because we're making a standard controller. With PS2 I think we made 160 million controllers. Once you've defined the format, you stick to it. Now, that doesn't prevent third-party steering wheels having force feedback and obviously [Gran Turismo creator] Kazunori is going to be keen to have that. There will continue to be vertically integrated controllers like that, which are specific to an individual game.

Is there any way players could record their own gameplay footage to the hard drive and then share it online?

[Laughs] We're actually already working on it now. There are two ways to do it. One is as pure video actually saved direct from the gameplay experience, but that creates quite a large data cloud. The more efficient way of doing it is to record game input and then share that to each user. We are doing that in a very innovative way on a game that we haven't shown anybody yet.

How often do you expect PS3 firmware upgrades to happen?

Right now we're focused on day one. I would imagine that there would be firmware upgrade in time for the European launch. European consumers will probably get a step-up firmware upgrade, exactly as we did with PSP.

Presumably the PlayStation Store will be well-stocked for the UK launch, and we'll have the benefit of all the extra content.

Yes, although the stores are managed regionally, built on the same framework, you're right. There will be greater supply of content and availability of non-game content.

Is there any word on the European price of the 20GB model?

We've never announced the price in the UK. The answer is no, but I'm sure it will be announced in due course. However, retail has told us that the vast majority of interest is in the 60GB model. But now the 20GB has HDMI as well there's no effective difference in the machines whatsoever because all of the other functionality is available through a USB card reader.

Soooo... how's Killzone coming along?

With Killzone, the expectation internally and externally is very high – and I won't show it until it's going to exceed people's expectations. It will be next year before we show it again, but it's coming along very well. The team are working very hard, they know exactly what they have to

“We need to get to thinking about the experience of a game, not the interface.”

with the launches of PS1, PS2 and PSP – and about a third of these are PS3 exclusive, which is a similar ratio to what we had in the past. The difference this time is that more have come out of Sony's Worldwide Studios than before. Bearing in mind that we launched PS2 with Fantavision as a first party title – great game though it is – it's by no means the game on which you would rest an entire format. But look at PS3 launching in America with Resistance, Genji, NBA in full HD and Motorstorm. Plus an F1 demo available day one as a download and retail games coming out very shortly after launch. That's a pretty compelling line-up.

So which game would you rely on to sell the system this time?

I think we saw this with the PS1 to a certain extent, that a lot of people talked about the 'killer app' and actually it's the killer catalogue that you want. It's not about having a single title like a Mario or a Sonic on which you rest the entire platform personality on. It's about having a wide catalogue that satisfies a number of different consumer tastes and styles. If you're a sports fan in America, NBA and NFL available from day

single game that incorporates everything, but I think that will happen shortly.

What do you think is the most interesting use of the Sixaxis pad so far?

There's a couple. The fake on NBA; if you want to fake past a player you just tilt left or right, that's really intuitive. Flow is very intuitive, once you understand the control mechanism, which takes about three seconds. F1's steering, looking around in Resistance... We need to get to thinking about the experience of a game and not the interface. I think that we'll see the e-Distribution games making some really innovative uses of it.

Is rumble feedback really gone for good?

I've been very consistent on this. The rumble feature was a great, impactful way of the machine talking to the user on PS2. But you had no influence on it; you just received a single channel of feedback from the game. Sixaxis gives you greater influence over the game environment, enabling you to do things you could never do with buttons and sticks alone. That will yield way more sophisticated gameplay

do and there's no doubt they will achieve it, but there's nothing to be served by something that doesn't satisfy my goals for that project. I can tell you, though, that some elements already exceed the trailer.

Can you describe a typical day on PlayStation Network a year from now?

That's a great question... Checking in with my clan to see what the plan is for tonight's SOCOM or Resistance games. Searching out the latest trailers, downloadable demos, skins for my desktop. Downloading a new album, reading the fine editorial of Official PlayStation Magazine, watching stuff on YouTube that my friends have emailed me about... You only have to look at the Cross Media Bar to see how everything is going to fit into a Network environment. Obviously you've got your friend lists, the ability to chat directly with them, you've got your internet browser and the Store with downloadable games.

Are there any Easter eggs in the Cross-Media Bar that you could show us?

A lot of these applications have been written by people who have written games, so I am sure there are interesting little things in there. There are some secrets, but I can't tell you otherwise I'd have to shoot you.

What prototypes did the external design of PS3 go through?

There were two, no, three actually. One that was very much in the mould of traditional consumer electronics: slab fronted, and that never moved beyond the conceptual phase. This [the final design] is the one that Kutaragisan spent the most time on, although it did evolve a little bit from E3 2005. The basic shape is the same, even though it's a bit bigger. Then there was another one that was a bit more out there, but I can't tell you what it looked like because we may yet see it in other devices.

What impact will downloadable content have on the way games are made?

It's a fantastic opportunity to continue to satisfy the demands of gamers, and having the community functionality embedded into the console means that on a Monday I can launch a new level, on Tuesday I can see what people are saying about it, on a Wednesday I can respond to that feedback and on a Friday I can put into QA [Quality Assurance] a revised version of the next episode for delivery on a Monday. [At this point Phil has an idea for a Christmas-themed Motorstorm bonus called Snowstorm, and rushes off to write it down.]

Is episodic gaming something that you are keen to experiment with?

We are doing a couple of things which are bang on that objective. The area that I'm most



interview

Phil Harrison on PS3

excited about at the moment is empowering user-created content. Embedding the user creation tools into the game application and opening it up to a cloud of users. That's the trend which I'm most excited about.

On the most basic level you're talking about map makers, but how far could user-created content go with PS3?

Well, I have to be really careful not to give the game away because we're keeping this secret, but don't think about it in terms of maps, think of it in terms of behaviours, environments, physics, rules... all the tools that you could want, but in a very consumer friendly way.

Would you create this content using the pad, or a mouse and keyboard?

The vast majority of the experience could be done with the pad, but for the small investment of plugging in a USB mouse there might be a second level, or a deeper level of finesse, that you could get in terms of pixel manipulation and paint programs or fine tuning things. Different users will have different wants; some will go deeper than others. Some will go all the way down to buying the special software that allows them to create their super levels. 95% of users are happy to be a consumer, but 5% are incredibly fanatical about creating a huge amount of content and the whole community benefits from it, and that is a really interesting trend. Look at Second Life. Everything about that experience is user-created content. That is a very, very powerful metaphor for where we're going. We've got two things in development. One in this building and one with an external developer that, when we do share them with you, I think you're going to go 'Ah, now I know what he was talking about'.

Can you tell us more about Afrika?

The game is non-violent, as you would expect. Videogames have always been a lot about wish fulfilment – I wish I could be a Formula 1 driver, I wish I could be a mercenary, I wish I could be a striker for Liverpool. That's a fairly well established desire. One thing that hasn't been explored is the ability to go places and have experiences that either through time or cost or safety you wouldn't be able to do in real life.

Finally, what is your favourite game-playing moment on any PlayStation?

Bloody hell! The cardboard box in Metal Gear Solid. God Of War... just all of God Of War. On PS3, it's seeing two cars collide realistically in Motorstorm, but the crash being nothing to do with me. Just the fact that I was hoofing it around, and I laughed at how they crashed. I had nothing to do with it – it was an event that just unfolded around me. It's great that Evolution have delivered that experience. I'm so proud of what they've done.



feature

Metal Gear Solid 4

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Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots is the story of a once supreme warrior now ravaged by time and plunged into a war zone where business, not ideology drives destruction. Will Solid Snake's last battle be his finest hour, or a last gasp?

Game Over



Chronology

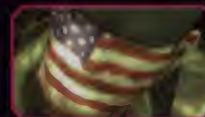
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (2004, PS2)

The year is 1963, and with the Cold War icy, a naive young Special-Ops agent, codenamed Naked Snake infiltrates central Russia to rescue a scientist said to be working on the first ever prototype of a nuclear tank. During the mission, he learns from his traitorous commander, The Boss, that today's enemy is tomorrow's ally, and that a secret elite, called The Patriots, are the real leaders of the world...



Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (2006, PS2)

This massive Snake Eater special edition includes a three-hour cut-scene movie tracing the game's tricky plot, Ape Escape-flavoured mini-games, and countless other goodies. It also acts as a taster for innovations in MGS4, with a first-ever online mode and a new, controllable third-person camera.



Master of combat...

Snake may be alone in the battlefield, but he's equipped to survive



The Solid Eye System

While rumours abound that Kojima will bring back Metal Gear's trademark exclamation marks above spooked goons' heads in the final game – y'know, for *nostalgic* reasons – for now, the game screen is absolutely free of interface clutter. That's where Snake's techno pirate-patch, the Solid Eye System, comes in. Via this eyepiece, he'll have access to an advanced IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) battlefield scanner, enhanced vision modes, and will almost certainly be able to see remotely through the Metal Gear Mk.II drone's roving camera.

Close-quarters combat

Surprisingly, for a stealth operative, Snake's melee combat skills have always felt a poor second best to drilling goons from a distant postal code with an SVD sniper rifle. Not so in MGS4. He may be getting on, but the old dog appears to have learnt some new tricks. Specifically, ones that break bones, crush windpipes and generally pin down enemies like Batista on pay per view.



Sidearm
The USP handgun's back, but no silencer this time.

Snake's gun

Metal Gear is renowned for its military-grade recreations of real-world weaponry (mooing cyborg battle tanks aside) and MGS4 is no different. However, until now, Snake's been unable to modify his widowmakers. That's going to change with his new gun – the M4A1 carbine with SOPMOD kit. The M4A1 is a very effective weapon in its own right, but combine it with the Special Operations Peculiar MODification kit (a range of 'click and use' upgrades ranging from red dot sights to underslung grenade launchers) and it becomes a hugely flexible, modular weapons rig. In other words, the only gun Snake will ever need.



Chronology

Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops (2007, PSP)

It's 1970, and members of Naked Snake's Special-Ops group, Fox, have gone rogue, taking over a military base in South America equipped with nukes. Believed to be part of this coup, Naked Snake is imprisoned, but escapes to assemble a new team of operatives (including former enemies) and then sets out to clear his name.



Metal Gear (1997, MSX)

1995, and a terrorist group in Africa threatens nuclear war from a new republic, Outer Heaven. US Special-Ops unit FoxHound sends a new recruit, codenamed Solid Snake, to neutralise the threat. There, he learns that his enemy possesses a mech-like nuclear tank called a Metal Gear, and that their leader is, in fact, Snake's commander, Big Boss – a legendary soldier once known as Naked Snake.



and stealth

In MGS4 camouflage gets a bleeding-edge makeover

The OctoCam suit

Hiding under cardboard boxes may have worked for Snake in the past, but in the bleak, war-torn world of *Guns Of The Patriots* it's going to take more than stiffened paper products to keep the ultimate stealth operative alive. Enter MGS4's big idea – the OctoCam suit. When it comes to instinctive camouflage in the natural world, the octopus makes the chameleon's colour mimicry look about as subtle as a one-man-band covered in orange paint. Not only can octopi adapt their skin colour to the immediate environment, but they can replicate its texture too. Incredibly, Snake's new sneaking suit can do the same, matching, say, the weathered surface of chiselled stone, the smooth tessellated surface of a tiled wall, or the dank, moist look of a subterranean cave with uncanny accuracy. Nowhere to hide? With OctoCam, Snake could be in plain view and you wouldn't see him until it was too late.



✚ Lying low
MGS4's ever-changing battlefield means traditional hiding places are scarce. OctoCam evens the odds, enabling Snake to blend in virtually anywhere.



✚ Anarchy rules
Combine OctoCam with a full scale war and the ensuing chaos means that Snake can weave between opposing armies, playing one off against the other.

PS
079

Hiding places

Sneak can still use the environment to his advantage. Take this oil drum. Snake can hide in it and roll it over unsuspecting soldiers, before righting it again as if nothing happened.



Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake (1990, MSX2)

It's now 1999, and the small Middle Eastern country of Zanzibar is not only stockpiling nuclear weapons, but has kidnapped a scientist who has perfected a way to refine crude oil efficiently. Once again, FoxHound deploys Solid Snake who (predictably) finds that Big Boss has survived and is pulling the strings using a brand new Metal Gear mech. Snake emerges victorious and retires to Alaska.



Metal Gear Solid (1998, PS2, PC)

It's 2005, and renegade former members of FoxHound seize a secret Alaskan military base. Oddly, they demand the return of Big Boss's remains. Solid Snake returns to defeat the terrorists and confronts their leader, Liquid Snake, who reveals that the two of them are experimental clones of Big Boss. With Liquid defeated, we learn of a third clone, Solidus Snake, and that he is the US President.





Kojima interview

The creator of Guns Of The Patriots talks about OctoCam, taking sides, and electric shocks to the plums...

OPM We noticed in the new MGS4 trailer that Snake seems to be shooting soldiers from both sides of the conflict. With graphics getting more realistic do you feel that the moral aspect of gaming is going to become more important?

Hideo Kojima Well, this time Snake has his own rivals and destiny so he's in a battlefield but sometimes the people there don't have anything to do with him. So yes, there's a moral aspect to what Snake should or could do to others who are not really involved in his actions. It's up to the player and that's a deliberate theme this time.

OPM Does this freedom to make moral choices reflect how people approach Metal Gear games in different ways – with some people blasting through and some using stealth more – or is it just a reflection of the morally murky way wars are being fought now?

HK There are three aspects to this. Firstly, there's the real world changing as it is now with the Americans going everywhere and creating war. Secondly, there's MGS4's theme and plot, which has something to do with this. And the third aspect is that while MGS has always been a sneaking mission, **FPS shooting is a trend and I really wanted to give players that freedom this time.** I also want players to discover their emotions about how war changes life and people. You may decide to stick with nation 'A' or 'B' in the game's war, or you could destroy both. You could also choose not to ally with either

country. There are no political issues involved for Snake. You don't have to kill the enemy, but you might decide to. I want people to understand that kind of feeling – killing someone you had no intention to kill. These days, with any FPS you're either on side 'A' or side 'B' and you're killing, killing, killing, but my games shouldn't be like that, and that's why I have this big theme. Of course, this is still a game and I don't want people to be sick every time they shoot an enemy.

OPM The original tagline for MGS4 was 'No place to hide', and yet the more we see the OctoCam it seems that, now, potentially everywhere is a place to hide. To what extent will gamers be able to come up with creative places to stow away?

HK In the MGS series there has always been some obstacle or other that you could hide behind and not show your body so you wouldn't get spotted. This time it's not like you hide *somewhere* – it's more that you're in sight but out of sight in the battlefield. You're out of *attention*, so to say.

OPM Can you expand on that?

HK To use a funny analogy – in the past, the MGS series was like a bank robber trying to rob a bank at night; so there are guards, cameras etc. And when you get spotted you're immediately known as the robber. But in this game, you're going into the bank at midday. You

might just be a customer going in to make a deposit, but you still have to sneak in to accomplish your mission. So you're trying to deceive. You're on camera, so if you do weird things you'll be spotted as a robber, but if you don't you won't. It's more about deceiving the eye. I can't really reveal the top secrets but we [the development team] did our training camp in the mountains as we always do, and this time we had that kind of training: deceiving the eye, or crawling unseen while you're in view. That's what we did for MGS4.

OPM In the first MGS4 trailer we saw an ageing Snake inject himself with something. **At the end of the new trailer we see what looks like a younger Solid Snake:** is that him having reversed the effects of the serum or not?

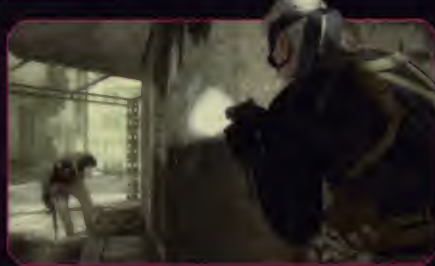
HK I put that in there because I wanted you to think about it, but it's not something you will actually know until you play the game.

OPM Can you tell us how the new bipedal cyborg Metal Gears will impact on the gameplay? They appear to operate in packs...

HK It's not necessarily about Snake vs these Metal Gears – the GEKKOs [Japanese for 'Moonlight']. Sometimes GEKKOs will spot you as you're the enemy, but sometimes you're not necessarily the enemy to them. This means that it might be nation 'A' vs GEKKO and Snake can walk right past them. There will be some situations like that, and vice versa.

The camera

Wondering why Metal Gear developer Kojima Productions has gone to such lengths to integrate a series-first, fully controllable third-person camera into the special edition of MGS3, *Substance*? After all, most developers just bung a new character and some artwork into the extras. Well, it seems that the answer is 'as a test run for MGS4'. As Kojima suggests – and the gameplay screen to the right reveals – the stubbornly fixed camera of old appears to have been ditched in favour of a pseudo first-person over-the-shoulder view. It was a sublime addition to stone-cold classic Resident Evil 4, and as the overhauled version of MGS3 reveals, the freedom to swing the camera around at will in Metal Gear puts the gamer firmly back in control.



Who is this?

The latest MGS4 trailer ends on an eye-boggling reveal that's had Metal Gear forum theorists fountaining much speculation. Having established that the once invulnerable Solid Snake is now rapidly ageing due to his provenance as clone of series bad guy Big Boss (keep up), we're treated to an eyeful of a man who's the spitting image of our hero in his prime, dressed in an identical OctoCam suit to Snake! So who is he? While feasibly he could be Solid Snake, rejuvenated by a cocktail of drugs, we reckon that's hooey. The good money's on this familiar stranger being a new clone of Snake. The real question is, who made him? Snake's pal Otacon, his former employer FoxHound, or MGS4's bad guy Liquid Ocelot?



Chronology

Metal Gear Solid Integral/VR Missions (1999, PSone)

The first of Hideo Kojima's [the series creator] special editions expanded the original Metal Gear Solid with several hundred 'Virtual Reality' training scenarios that unfold in wireframe arenas, and which test weapons and stealth skills. Cleverly, virtual reality training is referred to in the original MGS – the implication being that these VR scenarios are the same that Solid Snake trained on.



Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty (2001, PS2)

It's 2007 and an oil tanker sinks in New York harbour taking Solid Snake with it. Raiden, a new FoxHound agent, infiltrates the oil slick clean-up facility when the new US President is kidnapped. Raiden learns that the facility is a cover for a Metal Gear super carrier owned by The Patriots, and that the kidnappers are led by Snake's 'brother', Solidus Snake. 'Solid' has also survived and assists Raiden.



Locations, locations, locations

So now we have the rundown of MGS4's key warzones. But can we pinpoint the locations any better than that? Well, the Metal Gear saga has already featured a fictional Middle Eastern country called Zanzibar (See Metal Gear 2 in 'Chronology'). This seems like a likely first location. As for South America, upcoming PSP Metal Gear - Portable Ops - unfolds in South America in the 1970s. Could MGS4 return to this latest stopover in the series' saga? And as for the last stop - early MGS4 artwork shows MGS2 bad guy Vamp. Since he hails from Romania, well, that would make it the prime candidate for the European leg of the journey.

OPM We know the Middle East features in MGS4 and you've said you want this game to be like James Bond with Snake travelling the world. Is there any chance he'll visit the UK?

HK Unfortunately not. I want to go there, actually. But not Snake - not this time. **Officially, the locations are somewhere in the Middle East, somewhere in South America, and somewhere in Eastern Europe.**

OPM What prompted you to start motion-capturing real actors in MGS4? I understand you had a Japanese actress, [Yumi Kikuchi] on stage, and demonstrated how she was scanned for use in the game...

HK I cannot really say specifically as it would spoil MGS4's plot. However, **I can just hint that one group in the game will use an actual skeleton and skin texture, and that's why we needed it.** Of course, for Snake and Otacon we don't have real models. They are created, so there is a risk it won't work if you put the real actress or actors next to these people. However, we're thinking about how to make it a natural fit.

OPM Is it important to the plot that this group looks different?

HK Yes. Exactly.

OPM Was Ms Kikuchi happy with her likeness?

HK I hope she was happy. It's still a work in progress. What you saw was that we created a pure core of Ms Kikuchi the actress. She's not

The Sixaxis pad

The obvious use for the PS3 pad's new functionality is to scan Snake's surroundings in the zoomed-in first-person view. However, it could just as easily be used to toggle between lying, crouching, and standing stances, or to intuitively lean out from cover. Steering Snake's robot drone backup, the Metal Gear Mk.II could also take advantage of the motion-sensitive pad.



going to look like that in the game. She's going to be quite different. So don't think we're going to use it for promotional use like Capcom did with Takeshi Kaneshiro in Onimusha. We're not going to use her likeness like that.

OPM What are your feelings about PS3's new Sixaxis controller and the loss of the Dual Shock 2's rumble?

HK We can't say how we'll use the motion-sensing functionality specifically but we'll use it for sure. The controls in MGS3 got a little complex, so you'll have a little more direct control in MGS4. That said, I miss the rumble, and even now I hope it will come back.

OPM If we sneaked into the Kojima Production offices now, what would we see? Would we be able to play anything?

HK We're finally out of the research stage. We're now at a point where the system is finalised and we're saying 'let's go with this'. So the gauge and icons are there, but they're still temporary, meaning the design is still not fixed. Of course you can play, but we're still experimenting. If you go to one section you might play with the AI and the enemies, while in other areas you can play around with the cameras or the background.

OPM Last time we talked there was some discussion that you weren't sure how best to incorporate Snake's little robot friend [the

Metal Gear Mk.II], but now we see he's back in the game. We saw him electrocuting someone in the plums in the trailer. How will he work in Guns Of The Patriots?

HK That's because you mentioned it. I remember that interview. You don't just electrocute people in the nuts, though. That's in the trailer as a kind of a message that you can do something interesting with the Mk.II.

OPM So, are you saying that you can control the Mk.II in MGS4 yourself?

HK Yes.

OPM People in the UK always find people getting hit in the nuts very funny, so we're sure that will go down well.

HK In France it's always the shit part - the doo doo [laughs].

OPM Picture the scene. MGS4 has shipped to rave reviews and it's selling strongly. It's your first day back at work. What's the first item on your 'to do' list?

HK If MGS4 sells, then it's on to the next concept, which I have really wanted to do for a very long time. If it fails, I will probably start writing a letter to announce that I am leaving this company. That's what I kind of want to do, actually. [Kojima pauses] That's a joke...

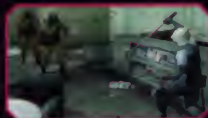
Is MGS4 alive?

So Kojima's development team is to use motion-capture for a specific group of game characters in MGS4, but not (interestingly enough) for main characters including Snake. What's going on? We have two theories, and both tie into MGS4's promised online mode. 1) That an elite group of professional gamers will visit online maps as special boss characters or - more likely, 2) that the motion-captured actors and actresses will form the basic templates onto which gamers will be able to map digital photos, and create their own likeness within online deathmatches or even persistent, online war zones. Far fetched? Well, remember, Kojima has always enjoyed breaking the fourth wall.



Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (2002, PS2, Xbox, PC)

This MGS2 special edition responded to fans' criticisms - for most of the game they had to control Raiden, not series hero, Snake - by including him in playable bonus missions. Substance also incorporated 300 new VR missions, 500 alternate missions, a Boss Battle mode, and even a bizarre skateboarding mini-game starring Solid Snake and Raiden.



Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots (2007, PS3)

It's 2013, and every nation has its own version of the Metal Gear mech. Worse still, war is now carried out by private military companies. When it emerges that the top five war corporations are owned by a group called Outer Heaven, itself operated by 'Liquid Ocelot' (series bad guy Revolver Ocelot, 'possessed' by the spirit of Liquid Snake), the UN knows exactly what to do - call Solid Snake...



The Metal Gear Mk.II

The confirmation that not only will Solid Snake's little robot helper make the final game, but that it will be directly controllable, is an exciting development. It means that for the first time in the saga, you'll be able to remotely scout out locations to assess threats, pilfer weaponry from careless or dead (i.e. very careless) enemies, and (on the evidence of the new trailer) electrocute combatants in the family jewels without ever leaving your latest hidey hole. Oh, and did we mention that, just like Snake, the Mk.II possesses adaptive OctoCam camouflage?



Jumping the queue

Want a PS3 on launch day? Then read our essential pre-order guide

Trying to get a new console on launch day is like trying to maintain your dignity while mud-wrestling feral children. It's a blur of midnight queues, eBay scams, red-faced parents and smug victors – a bunfight that requires dedication if you want to come out on top. Demand is enormous, supply like gold-dust, only the lucky, rich and ruthless succeed in bagging a PlayStation on launch day. But you can increase your chances of joining the lucky few if you know how to play the pre-order game.

A pre-order is a reservation for goods made with a game shop – online or brick. Pre-orders put you in a queue for the batch of consoles that arrive at launch but there's no guarantee that the shop will fulfil your order on day one or even for months. It all depends on how many machines each store gets and, right now, nobody knows how many PS3s Sony can deliver to the UK. So what should you do? Here's the state of play at the time of going to press...

Pre-order FAQ

How many PS3's will the UK get?

The chances of a shop fulfilling your pre-order on day one directly depend on how many PS3s are allocated to that store from the UK launch total. Many shops will only get a handful. The UK's PS3 ration comes from the European stockpile but some distributors suggest that machines meant for Europe could be diverted to the US and Japan as Sony's factories struggle to keep up with demand in the first few months. The US and Japan will only get 400,000 and 80,000 units each on their launch days.

Should I import?

It always means a lot of hassle in the long run. Sony has warned they'll take legal action against any retailers offering import PS3s: "To protect consumers from being sold hardware that does not conform to strict EU or UK consumer safety standards, due to voltage supply differences et cetera." Sony also points out that import PS3s will not be backwards compatible with either PS1 or PS2 software; will not play European Blu-ray movies or DVDs; and will not be covered by warranty. However, they are not imposing a regional-lock out on foreign games – so you may well be able to play Japanese and US games on a Euro PS3 even if the games aren't localised.

I want a sure-fire way to get a PS3

There's only one guaranteed way to get hold of a PS3 at UK launch – sit down with a stack of cash on the day, and fire up eBay. Be aware, the prices are certain to be ridiculous. However, if you've got enough money, then you can secure an auction for yourself. The cons? Well, you'll still have to wait for it to be delivered and will have to keep your fingers crossed that the seller is reliable. What's more, you risk splashing an enormous amount of cash on a new machine only to see a new batch of them flowing into shops a few short weeks later. There's also the possibility that the seller won't even have a PS3 to sell. Some US sellers are basing their auctions on pre-orders that shops might not be able to fulfil on day one. As a result dozens have had their accounts blocked for auctioning things they won't be able to deliver within eBay's 30-day cut off.



Pre-order plans

Game

There's no scheme in place, but pop into your local branch and there's a chance you'll be able to leave details with staff, who'll get in touch when you can place official pre-orders.



GameStation

A £20 deposit will get you a PS3 pre-order from within any branch. However, pre-order queues are limited, so if you miss your chance, you may have to look elsewhere.



ePlay

ePlay are taking PS3 pre-orders. A refundable £20 will get you a place in a first-come, first-served queue. You may be too late to get a launch unit, but you'll be in line to get one from the next batch.



How often will the shops restock?

Once the store sells its launch day allocation then the rest of its pre-orders go on hold until it's resupplied by Sony's PS3 distributors. After canvassing a variety of retailers the general consensus is that restocking takes 'about a month' in their experience. Unfortunately shops are under no obligation to fulfil your pre-order on launch day, but the silver lining is that PS3's delay in Europe should mean Sony can deliver a steadier flow of new machines as its production capacity builds up over time.

Is it true that you have to put down a £150 deposit?

That was an idea suggested by Sony, but that's all it was – an idea. Most of the shops currently taking pre-orders will do so for £20. Still, there's no clear indication as to whether or not the £150 plan will be adopted by retailers waiting to open their pre-order schemes sometime closer to March.

Who decides which pre-orders are completed first?

Most retailers use a first-come, first-served system to distribute their launch consoles, working their way down the list of reservations. Rarely, they'll use a lottery, where a random draw is used to decide who walks away with the loot. Be sure to give a shop your correct contact details when placing a pre-order, too (and don't forget to notify them of any change). If a shop can't get in touch, they may just give your machine to the next person on the list.

Will I have to fight a man to get a hold of a PS3?

Ideally not, but wander through the bad part of town with your new PS3 held aloft, wearing a big goofy grin, and you might do.

Pre-order checklist

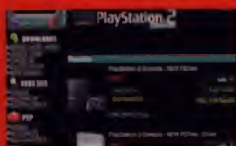
- ☐ Put your name down for a pre-order as early as poss.
- ☐ Put your name down with a shop that's recently opened its scheme.
- ☐ Sign up with all retailers that provide email notification of scheme start dates.
- ☐ Check how soon they are obliged to fulfil your order.
- ☐ Check how much deposit they want to take.
- ☐ Check whether the offer is for a 20GB or 60GB PS3.
- ☐ Avoid bundle deals that can change games at any time.
- ☐ Choose your games from the list over the page.
- ☐ Get to know your local shop manager for insider info.

Is it worth placing pre-orders with several shops?

That will certainly increase your chances, like buying two lottery tickets instead of one. But if you hit the jackpot twice then you'll either have to cancel one pre-order and lose a deposit, or stump up almost a grand to buy two PS3s and sell the spare one. (Which, realistically, won't be hard.) The best advice is to talk to as many shop managers as possible. The better you know them, the easier it is to get an honest estimate out of them, and put your deposit with whoever you trust most.

Chips World

Chips has been taking PS3 pre-orders since November 2005. Put down a £20 deposit at a local branch and you'll be placed in the queue. Probably a rather long one mind.



High street chains

Currys.digital, HMV and Virgin refused to comment on the likelihood of setting up PS3 pre-order schemes. We'll continue to hound them until they reveal all.



Pre-order latest

Some shops will announce their pre-order schemes over the coming weeks. Ironically, you've got more chance of securing a PS3 at launch from a scheme that has yet to open, than from one that's been piling up customers for months. That's because all retail allocations are strictly limited and because most operate a first-come, first-served system. Long-running schemes will have already sold their launch batch. We'll report on the latest developments, next issue, on sale 10 January.

The pre-order hit list

Want to pre-order PS3 games? Unsure of what to choose for a bundle deal? Here's our pick of PS3's UK launch titles



Assassin's Creed (p66)

Stunning in appearance and scope, this rooftop-scrampering historical 'social stealth' game makes the Crusades its bloody playground. We can't wait.



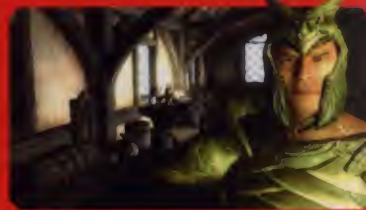
MotorStorm (p30)

Big laughs with this brilliant off-road racer that features ATVs, bikes, monster trucks and the best mud ever generated by a console. Dirtlicious.



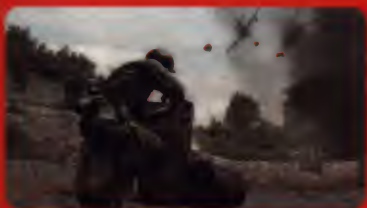
Stranglehold (p84)

No fiddly jumping, no convoluted plot – just millions of bullets, dozens of banisters to slide down and a handful of doves. Awesome.



The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (p44)

Get Oblivion and you might not need anything else: some gamers spend days exploring and chatting to the locals. We prefer the 'kill 'em all' approach.



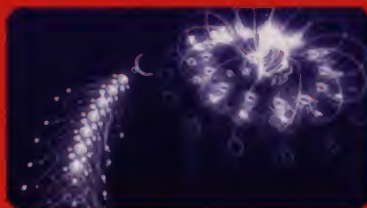
Call Of Duty 3 (p48)

Allied troops (including the Brits) fight relentless waves of Nazis in the most bomb-happy, shell-shocking WW2 shooter yet.



Burnout 5 (p66)

Beautiful shiny cars racing and crashing like million-dollar fireworks. If you think Gran Turismo HD could be a bit sterile, this is the fiery-exhausted answer.



Flow (p42)

Innovative and beautiful e-Distribution title that makes game art out of Darwin. Swim oceans, absorb prey, evolve into more complex creatures.



Gran Turismo HD (p86)

Cars that look, feel and handle better than the real thing. If you're Jeremy Clarkson, you may notice a warm trickle running down your inside leg now.

Pre-order plans

Amazon.co.uk

No pre-orders yet for PS3, but you can pre-order games, which cost £49.99. You can also sign up for an email alert that will tell you when PS3 pre-orders begin.



Play.com

Play is currently taking PS3 pre-orders, but only for a three-game bundle, at £549.99. The games are Formula One 06, Warhawk and SingStar, but all are subject to change depending on availability.



Game.uk.com

Currently there's very little PS3 info available apart from a mention of the delay on the site, a new release date and the chance to sign-up for email notification of developments.





Tony Hawk's Project 8 (p64)

The eighth Hawk might not be number one on your list, but the new Sixaxis motion-sensitivity support should make the tricks feel box-fresh again.



Heavenly Sword (p63)

God Of War with a ginger Rapunzel? Best hair physics ever? Say what you like, the fighting in this action adventure is astonishing.



Resistance: Fall Of Man (p26)

Exclusive to PS3: it's big gun fun in a post-apocalyptic Britain swarming with repulsive alien breeds. Fast-paced and good-looking with an unusual sci-fi twist.



Ridge Racer 7 (p40)

No punishing learning curves here: just bubble gum arcade fun. Gorgeous, but not too challenging - it's the gaming equivalent of pulling Paris Hilton. So hot!



Virtua Fighter 5 (p38)

Forget Tekken, the world's most flawlessly balanced brawler is exclusive to PS3. We've decided to 'be the monkey girl.



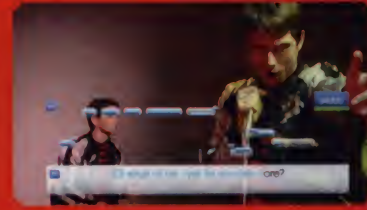
Fight Night Round 3 (p52)

It's the best boxing game on any format and now comes with a brutally realistic in-your-face first-person mode that will have your head spinning.



Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas (p58)

A tactical SWAT team shooter, you abseil into hostage situations and dispense lead justice to terrorists. It's a huge improvement on PS2's version.



SingStar (p32)

Get tanked, get courage, get a baying crowd round, holler into the microphone karaoke style, mangle tunes you quite like, empty your wallet online.



Warhawk (p36)

Blow stuff up while enormous battles rage in the air and on the ground. Quickfire online play could make this an early frontrunner on the Network.



Unreal Tournament 2007 (p55)

Heartbreakingly authentic warfare not your thing? Get an online shooter set in the future and romp around in enormous vehicles armed with lasers.



Unknown Realms (p59)

The only Japanese-style RPG likely to appear near launch, the tilt-based spell casting system should keep you going until Final Fantasy XIII tips up.



Lair (p60)

The best use of PS3's motion control available on launch day, especially if you're a fan of savaging infantrymen with a dragon.



Game, set and pack

Don't want to pay for a bundle? Here's where you stand

When a new console launches and supplies are tight, it's no surprise that certain shops offer nothing but package deals that oblige you to buy a game or two alongside the console. But is this practice above board, or is it just exploitation? It can be irritating, for sure, but there's nothing dodgy about it. Customers have no right to buy something, since retailers aren't obliged to sell you anything. Also be warned, many retailers reserve the right to switch bundled games at the last second. Nasty. For those that offer a choice, see our pick of the launch titles above.



HMV.co.uk

No mention of the console itself, but you can find pre-order options for games. The dates attached to them aren't always reliable, but they're offered for £69.99, delivered.



Indie stores

Of all the stores we spoke to, none has plans to offer a pre-order system. However, if you're a regular face there's a chance you could set up an informal, verbal pre-order.

feature

Gran Turismo HD

It's all yours

Buy a new Ferrari for next to nothing?
You can with **Gran Turismo HD** downloads



Gran Turismo is Sony's most popular and critically respected series. To date it has sold north of 40 million copies worldwide. It is simply not a game to take risks with. Or so you might think, but GT has also long been the flag-bearer for new PlayStation technology, and now, with Gran Turismo HD (high-definition), it's pioneering downloadable gaming on PS3, creating the first console game that enables players to decide exactly how they want to build their game. Now the entire experience is customisable, not just the motors. You buy the tracks, cars and modding parts as individual

components for your game. It's like iTunes for racers. You decide how much to spend and what you want to play. Potentially, it's the biggest change to the way games are played since the shift to 3D. But there's also an obvious risk: that gamers could end up paying over the odds to get the 'whole' game.

The journey so far has been bumpy. GTHD started life as a demo at the 2005 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in LA. Developer Polyphony Digital took GT4 and ran it at an ultra-high 1080p resolution. Beautiful, admitted the cynics, but far too familiar. Meanwhile, the timescale for the 'real' GT5 stretched ►

for 40p



PS
087

feature

Gran Turismo HD

ever further into the distance. GT5 won't appear until 2008.

So, in the meantime, we have this: the official release of an experimental demo, only it's much more than that. GTHD consists of a single disc with two content sets – Classic and Premium. The Classic section is the hi-def, GT4 stuff, and is playable online. Premium is a taster of GT5 – a sneak preview of the new graphics, handling and damage models we can look forward to in the future title. But it's the downloadable, DIY game system that looks like it will have the biggest impact on gamers.

Premium mode will come with two tracks and 30 cars. The Classic section will initially have... nothing. Sony claim this GTHD starter kit will be available for a low price (though the cost has yet to be announced), because the real guts of the game – tracks, cars and mod parts – will be sold from PS3's online shop. Polyphony plans to stock the PlayStation Store with new download items for both modes pretty much as fast as they can make 'em. For the Japanese launch this means one more downloadable track and 30 extra cars available for the Premium mode. They also plan to make 770 cars, 51 tracks and 45,000 mod parts available for Classic mode – everything from GT4. So new content will arrive regularly, and players can cherry-pick their favourites. UK prices are not set, but the Japanese rates work out at 20p to 45p per car and 90p to £2.25 per circuit.

There are good reasons for releasing GT this way. A 'live' experience which grows and evolves with players is an exciting new gameplay idea. Developers have long talked about the benefits of episodic gaming and this is the racing equivalent. It's also a fact that 2008 is a long way off. GT is a major series and Sony doesn't want us to forget it. What's more, development times are getting longer; it took a week to create a GT/GT2 car for PS1, then a month per car for GT3 and 4. Polyphony claims that a PS3 car takes the equivalent of six months in man hours to make. Releasing the core game, then adding content as it's done, means we can all play while we're still young enough to focus on the screen.

The result will be a racing game tailor-made for each player. Sick of Tsukuba? Can't stand another lap of



"The real source of GTHD's content will be PS3's online shop"

Twin Ring Motegi? Would rather watch your own family burn than drive a Daihatsu Move? Then don't bother downloading them. Whereas previous GTs forced you to race in certain locations, GTHD can't. It's got to answer to you. As Kazunori Yamauchi (the creator of GT) revealed to us: it's the opinions of GTHD players that will sculpt the final shape of Gran Turismo 5.

While wonders such as Trial Mountain, El Capitan and the

Nurburgring are sure to be popular worldwide, it will be interesting to see how some of the others fare. Tsukuba, Motegi and Fuji all have enormous significance in Japan, for instance, (they're a legendary car-tuners' proving ground, Honda's 50th anniversary present to itself, and a one-time F1 circuit respectively), but to most Europeans they're just insanely dull.

Change is inevitable. The data Polyphony gathers from the downloads

Download your dream garage...

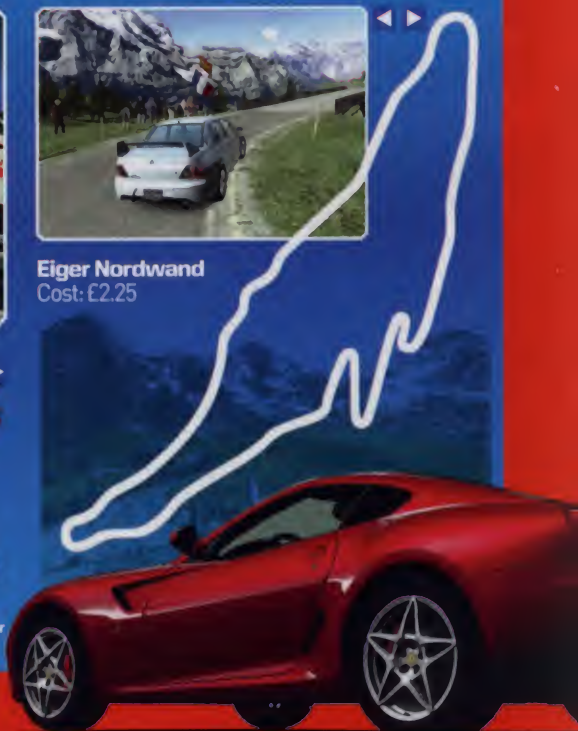
Like an enormous pizza topped with spark plugs and engine oil, GTHD lets you play it your way. In addition to the disc content, you'll also be able to download new cars and tracks from the PlayStation Store (UK pricing to be confirmed). Content is split between 'Premium', which is brand new and designed to give you a taste of GT5's quality, and 'Classic', which uses hi-def versions of the cars and tracks seen in GT4. What's more, a Sony insider told us it's likely you'll be able to test drive cars before buying.



...and tracks



Eiger Nordwand
Cost: £2.25





◀ The new 'Premium mode' Eiger Nordwand course has been designed to show off GTHD and PS3 at its best. The stunning backdrop is the hook, but your attention quickly switches to what is a supremely technical driving experience.



will form an ongoing and honest poll, revealing preferences among players and even between countries. It's possible GT5 (and other games using this model) will be 'regionalised' after sale via downloads. Perhaps player-powered content can be slotted seamlessly into a championship structure for GT5 and beyond. This game will help decide.

Damage control

And it's not just in-game objects we'll be downloading. Polyphony promises some long-awaited performance updates for the new game. First on the list are vastly improved AI routines in early 2007, and then the near-mythical car damage feature – denied to GT fans for so long. While Yamauchi has made progress with most manufacturers re: spanking their beloved marques into scrap, they're still not *all* on board. Damage to most cars, but not all, would look extremely odd. So metallic injuries may end up being limited to racers,

which are licensed from the teams who alter and run them, rather than the creators of the original vehicle. Clearly, race teams have a more flexible attitude to damage than giant corporations.

Those awful, invisible, infinitely strong barriers will disappear too, replaced by realistically demolishable constructions. Whether this will let us fly off the edge of the Grand Canyon is unknown, but it's well within the PS3's capabilities, which Yamauchi says can finally power entirely 'realistic' physics. Some of the stranger anomalies in previous versions – particularly with the collisions – occurred because most of the processing power was funnelled purely into on-track dynamics. No more. The world and its physics will now influence the cars whether they're under control on the track or out of control in the gravel. It sounds minor, but it's a big step towards realism.

Realism remains the series' watchword. GTHD offers two distinct driving models: Normal and

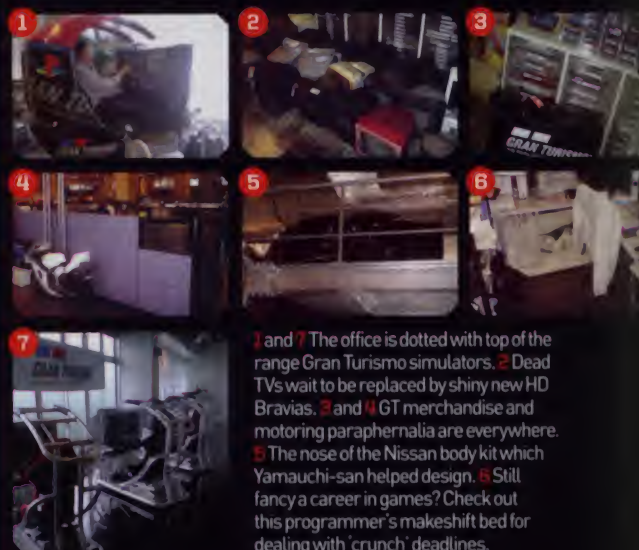


At home with Polyphony Digital

Inside the Gran Turismo factory



Tucked away on a quiet street in Tokyo's Koto ward, Polyphony Digital's offices are, from the outside, entirely unremarkable. In fact, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd come to the wrong place were it not for the cars parked out front. Specifically, a waspish looking BMW M3 and a virginal white 2006 Subaru Impreza. The kind of cars you suspect wouldn't last more than a few minutes left unattended back in the UK. Inside, it's not nearly so anonymous. The large open-plan office is a shrine to Gran Turismo, with merchandise and automotive memorabilia everywhere. Overhead hangs the Nissan 350Z RS bodykit designed by Polyphony boss Kazunori Yamauchi. Elsewhere you'll find rows of GT simulators (including the Subaru-designed rollcage model); prototypes for the latest Logitech steering wheel controller, and a graveyard of dead TVs waiting to be replaced by a stack of brand-new Bravias. Even on the Saturday we visited, there were several programmers working away on the innumerable PS3 dev kits. In fact the work ethic is so entrenched that they've even built bedrooms where anyone 'pulling a late one' can crash.



1 and 7 The office is dotted with top of the range Gran Turismo simulators. 2 Dead TVs wait to be replaced by shiny new HD Bravias. 3 and 4 GT merchandise and motoring paraphernalia are everywhere. 5 The nose of the Nissan body kit which Yamauchi-san helped design. 6 Still fancy a career in games? Check out this programmer's makeshift bed for dealing with 'crunch' deadlines.



▲ The GTHD Classic package recycles GT4's content in glorious high-definition. Cars, courses and software updates – such as improved AI and (at last) damage – will be available after launch as a series of purchasable downloads. The era of bespoke, iTunes-style gaming is almost upon us.



Professional. Polyphony is cagey about the exact differences, but it's likely the underlying physics model will be more forgiving (and drift friendly) in Normal, as well as benefiting from greater grip and the full array of driving assists. Will Professional be 'harder' than the current Gran Turismo? Certainly the extra power of the Cell processor means the handling will be richer, deeper and more detailed than ever before, but whether that translates as 'harder' depends on your point of view. For the hardcore, greater authenticity means greater control. For the more casual player it may be too much, so Normal mode comes in.

The pursuit of realism isn't helped by the loss of the old DualShock's rumble, however. So Polyphony are working hard to compensate with vital audio clues such as tyre scrub, slip and

wheelspin to replace the lost feedback, plus an increase in wind and road noise.

Further compensation will arrive in the shape of Ferrari, who are joining the series for the first time (incredibly). The first two models to be confirmed are the 599 GTB Fiorano and the F430, with more to follow. Long-term fans can relax in the knowledge that Kazunori Yamauchi is a car connoisseur. While ever-popular exotics such as the F50 and the 360 Modena are near bankers, older but utterly wonderful classics such as the F355, 512 Boxer, F40 and Dino are likely too. Whatever the specifics, Polyphony's creations so far have been wowing Ferrari's licensing department – they're the best replicas they've ever seen, so they say. And look out for Yamauchi's personal favourite Ferrari, the futuristically curvaceous 1960s endurance racer, the 330 P4. It

was Ferrari's answer to Ford's then-dominant GT40. It is life expressed in art and, as in the 1960s, the 330 is bound to romp in to steal the GT40's thunder.

Two wheels good?

There is one dark cloud. Since the early videos showed bikes mixing with cars, there's been no mention of their inclusion in GTHD. But as the bikes-only Tourist Trophy uses straight GT4 technology, making them available for the Classic mode should at least be straightforward. Let's hope bikes aren't 'postponed', like the PSP's Gran Turismo Mobile. After all, GTM is delayed until GT5 is 'done', but when will a game like this ever be done? The year 2008 is the official reply. And thanks to the imminent explosion of technology, at least there's an enormous amount to look forward to before then.



Interview with Kazunori Yamauchi, Polyphony President

How complete is what we're seeing now in terms of final, GT5 spec?

It's only 30% complete and nowhere near my satisfaction. It's not at 60 frames per second at the moment, there are no lighting effects, natural things – grass, trees, possibly even wild animals that exist in the

various environments – haven't been replicated yet, and there's much more. [laughs]

Will there be damage?

Absolutely, yeah. It goes to the extent where not only the cars will deform but the barriers too, so you'll go through!

You've said it's always the Western press asking for damage... have you included it because you're fed up with being asked?

There's two angles to this. One is I'm interested in what happens to cars realistically when they get damaged, for my own curiosity, and the PS3 finally allows for me to explore that angle. The other angle is that through the relationships with the manufacturers, their attitude towards the GT franchise has changed. Maybe not all, but some have changed in a direction that is more positive for us in implementing damage. Given that, I think that the best compromise might be to limit damage to racing cars.

It's nearly ten years since the first game – will Gran Turismo's structure change now?

There are no concrete blueprints or designs for GT5 at the moment, but along the road map I've set a point in time – Christmas 2008, I think – by which GTHD will have grown significantly. As it's a 'live' product, and through communication with the users, feedback and whatnot, I hope GTHD will grow into a much different product from where we are now. This will obviously reflect heavily on what GT5 will be.

How will the lack of rumble and addition of Sixaxis control affect things?

Just to explain about the tilt – adding the motion sensor to the controller was actually my idea. I asked for it, but the concept of the application it will have in the game is not very easy to understand without actually using it in-game. It's actually more in-depth... I want to know whether the user is holding the controller or not. It's very important.

It's a new computing style where if the player puts the joypad down, the game automatically shifts from in-game mode to replay mode, or menu screen, whatever. And when they pick it back up, it goes back to gameplay. These are the kind of implementations I had in mind when I originally requested it. In terms of the vibration feature being pulled out, yes, of course it's very unfortunate that's been taken out, but at the same time the vibration feature and the tilt feature cannot coexist, so it's kind of inevitable.

Premium track: road-tested

Sitting at the start line of the new Eiger Nordwand course in a yellow Lotus Elise 111R, waiting for the off, you can almost smell the Swiss air. Perhaps it's GT's unflinching commitment to realism, but the visuals have always had a spacious quality that other driving games struggle to imitate. That impression is even more pronounced on PS3, with the Alps looming large over lush fields. The astonishing level of detail on the cars is slightly undone by the new three-dimensional spectators, who just wave their arms like mannequins. Still, the overall effect is impressive, and Polyphony still has a bucket of graphical gloss to slosh over the final version. The Eiger Nordwand is the first of the new Premium tracks, designed to give players a taster of the quality they can expect from GT5 when it eventually arrives. Predictably, it makes no attempt to ease you in gently. You've barely time to build up a decent lick of speed before being funnelled into a vicious set of hairpins. Navigate these and you're rewarded with a long straight and the chance to really open up the throttle. The rest of the course offers up a checklist of vintage GT moments – more tight turns, a long climb, a tunnel, and a bridge which provides the one moment when we really notice the absence of rumble.

State of the track

We're off! The Eiger Nordwand is impressively in the background – helping distract from the new 3D but still robotic spectators.



Final stretch

GT's track design is superb and, as the road rises to the finishing line, we're already thinking about how to shave time off our next lap.



Speed limit

Polyphony's ever, no sooner have you got up to speed, it's straight into a section of truly evil hairpins. Cheers Kazunori!



Open road

Emerge unscathed from the hairpins and you're finally rewarded with the chance to really floor it.

Tunnel vision

The climb into the hills provides more opportunity to 'open her up'. Meanwhile, the tunnel shows off the lighting and shadowing.



Track info

Track name Eiger Nordwand

Country Switzerland

Description Set against the backdrop of Mount Eiger in the Alps, (Nordwand is German for 'north wall') this is the first of the two Premium quality tracks included with GTHD.

New track cost 90p-£2.25

OPM verdict This is vintage GT. Intricate, beautiful, and doesn't suffer fools gladly. We can't wait to see what other treats the 'Premium' package has to offer.



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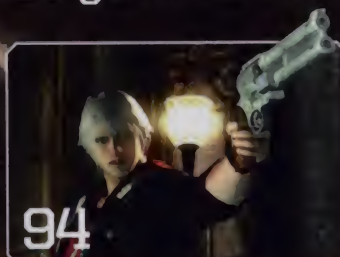
110 Battlefield Bad Company

Sign up for multi-vehicular warfare now!
Moustache entirely optional.

Previews next wave

Look! Over the hills! PS3 games... thousands of 'em

Have you ever worked out the amount of time you spend playing games versus the amount of time you spend thinking about playing them? Much as we all moan about slipped release dates, a big part of being a gamer is savouring the anticipation. Poring over new shots, devouring the latest hands-on impressions and imagining what it's going to be like when you finally get that AAA, genre-busting, killer-app home. (Which is usually the exact same point you start getting excited about the next AAA, genre-busting, killer-app.) Over the following pages we take you beyond PS3's launch line-up and into the next wave of games you'll be playing deep into 2007 and long after. Our carefully picked selection awaits your inspection, just be sure to warm your hands.



94

Devil May Cry 4

Outrageous moves, chiselled looks and a plot you could write on a grain of rice. Business as usual, then.



98

Afrika

Sony's innovative safari sim lets you admire the dark continent's most noble beasts. Note: that's 'admire', not 'shoot'.



102

Resident Evil 5

New sun-kissed setting and super-fast enemies? Essential gaming if, like us, you can't wait for the zombie holocaust to start.



Next
Wave

Can't
wait?
Play
these

PlayStation 2



**DMC3:
Special
Edition**

(PS2, 2006)
Dante's latest and
greatest – the most
advanced DMC yet.

PlayStation 2



God Of War

(PS2, 2005)
Drawn from different
legends but with
similarity between and
bloodthirsty gameplay

PlayStation Team **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2007 **Pub** Capcom **Dev** In-house

Devil May Cry 4

⬤ Nero ⬤ Hero ⬤ Dante ⬤ Evil?

When we first meet Capcom producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi in Tokyo he's relaxed, sitting across the table from us in a Capcom meeting room. One of the men behind Resident Evil 4, and the original Devil May Cry, he's been working on the fourth instalment of the DMC series for over a

year. He's also the man responsible for the biggest upheaval in the series' history: Dante is no longer the lead character. Kobayashi explains, "When we made Vergil a playable character in the Special Edition of Devil May Cry 3, we added some cool new moves that wouldn't have suited Dante." He

continues, "We realised that we'd reached a limit with what we could do with that character. Also, as we were launching on a new console, we wanted to appeal to all action gamers rather than just Devil May Cry fans. Using a new character meant we could introduce new play styles to break in new players

Quick pitch

Attack

Fast-paced action adventure – fight with swords and guns to kill everything on screen.

Hard

The series is famous for a difficulty level that can break even the most hardcore gamer.

Demons

There's hellspawn of all shapes and sizes – every single one of them wants you dead.



✖ This is old hero Dante who's being replaced by new hero Nero (similar fella on right). Dante red coat, Nero bluecoat.

gently." So sword-wielding, gun-toting acrobat Dante has been forced to step down, making way for some new blood.

And so Nero is born. He's the guy in the long coat, with the gun and the big sword, and the Hollyoaks hair. And while he may look a bit like Dante, it's important to note that he's a *completely* different character. After all, Dante would never wear blue. Personality-wise, the change is more obvious. Nero is less of a wisecracking smart arse, and more a pessimistic loner. He's been raised on the island of Fortuna, as a knight in the Order Of The Sword – a religious cult committed to



✔ Nero tears up a rag-tag bad guy with his customised double-barrel pistol.



wiping out demons. They worship Dante's dad, a demon called Sparda, who made it his life's work to wipe his own filthy kind off the face of the world.

Gatecrasher

Kobayashi shows us a scene that occurs early in the story. New boy Nero, his arm in a sling, is taking part in a ceremony in a huge gothic cathedral. Suddenly, the ceiling's stained glass window crashes inwards, raining coloured glass on the worshippers below. Through the debris drops Dante – coat flying majestically behind him. He lands perfectly, draws his gun and executes the cult's leader. A stunned Nero pulls a pretty girl towards him protectively. We ask Kobayashi who she is, but he just smiles saying, "That will have to be a secret for now."

A blood-soaked Dante is rushed by the Order's knights, but the demon hunter takes them out effortlessly. Then it's Nero's turn. Dante leaps into the air as Nero pulls out his dual-barrelled revolver



✔ Capcom has confirmed that Dante will be a playable character, not just a cameo role.



and deflects the bullets with his sword. The scene ends as the pair clash steel while running up a statue's giant outstretched sword.

It's a thrilling set-piece, and afterwards Kobayashi replays it, panning and manipulating the camera as the movie plays. The whole sequence runs in real-time and isn't just a pre-rendered movie. Kobayashi even pauses it at the moment Dante crashes through the ceiling window, rotating the view around thousands of reflective glass shards, frozen in space.

After the exciting demonstration, we finally get to sample the action for ourselves. "This is a demo to show off where we are right now," explains Kobayashi. The gameplay opens with a panoramic view of a bright sunny plaza. It's a welcome break from the gothic corridors that have dominated the series to date. Nero is standing on the steps of a palace in Fortuna, its Venetian architecture a nod to the game's inspiration – The Divine Comedy (an epic Italian poem about heaven and hell). ▶



Next
Wave

Boss battle

Nasty!

One of the early encounters involves this painful mess of horny bits and fire.

Flaming!

The giant demon chases you around, while the wooden huts in the background slowly catch fire and burn to the ground.

Hellspawn!

As the monster tries to cleave Nero in two with its fell blade, it trails some gorgeous heat haze effects. Its crackling skin and molten blade also glow in a face-meltingly realistic way.



"All our staff members have read it," says Kobayashi, "it inspires every aspect of the design".

A few steps into this renaissance world, six slimy enemies brandishing blades drop from the sky. The fighting is incredibly intuitive and we're soon leaping around, flipping monsters into the air and juggling them with our inexhaustible supply of bullets. As Nero darts about, the world visually warps around him,

"Certain to be one of PS3's most visually impressive titles."

creating a dazzling light show as he rips his foes apart and they explode in showers of watery particles.

It's not just guns and swords though – there's also a dark secret. Nero's arm was in a sling in the previous scene; not because it was broken, but because it

was entering the first stages of changing into the Devil Bringer. This is Nero's unique demonic power: a spectral yellow hand that darts out and enables you to target and manipulate monsters from a distance. You can grab 'em, throw 'em and pound 'em into the floor. It's particularly useful for stringing long, uninterrupted attack combos together; rather than having to plod over to your next victim, you can seize him and toss him up in the air as you're finishing off his mate.

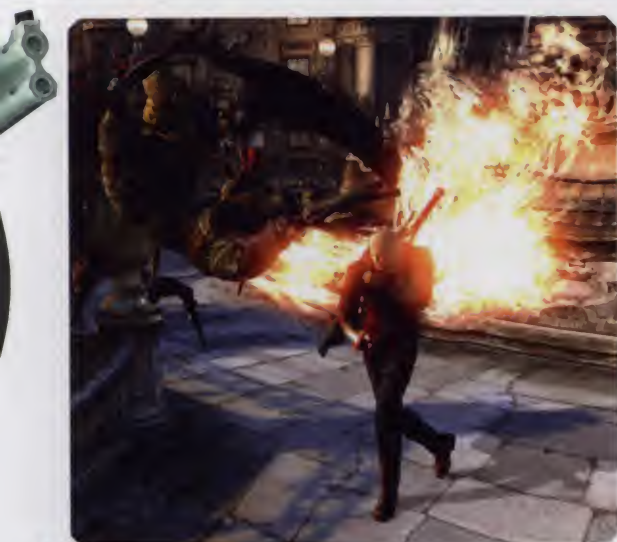
After the plaza scene, we're introduced to some more traditional Devil May Cry locations. There's a castle turret's spiral staircase, with dusty frescos illuminated by weak sunlight from the arrow slits in the wall. Then there's a storage room, with moths dancing around a naked light bulb. Excitingly, both areas are full of harlequin-like patchwork enemies that pull themselves together from bits of cloth. Then we move into the dockyard,



▲ This is the concept art that suggests Nero will be able to transform into a demon-like form. If it's anything like Dante's Devil Trigger then it'll make him nails for a limited period only.

Timeline Devil May Cry's highs and lows





❑ The staples of DMC gameplay in action – jumping, shooting and let's not forget stabbing.



Who the hell is Nero?

He's the new hero of Devil May Cry 4



Character History

Nero is a holy knight in The Order of The Saint. This religious group worships the demon Sparda, and continue his work – protecting the world from evil. Sparda, however, is also Dante's dad, so when big D turns up and mysteriously starts slaughtering members of the order, it must be a real kick in the teeth for Nero.

Weapons

Gun

A dual semi-automatic revolver that can fire two bullets at once. It's based on Dan Smith's weapon from another Capcom game, Killer 7.

Sword

The Red Queen blade comes with a new ability that lets up Nero's attacks with the shoulder buttons.

The Devil Bringer

Nero's demonic hand enables him to grab, throw and assault buddies from range, enabling him to chain together longer combat combos.

Speculation

With white hair, no edible sword skills and demon blood flowing through his veins, we're pretty convinced Nero is either Dante's, or his brother Vergil's son.

featuring the rusted hulks of ships bobbing up and down in the water, as an orange sun sets in the background. It all looks especially crisp running in full HD.

Devil may succeed

The final location is a large area full of wooden huts. As we run into the centre a cut-scene triggers, showing a huge flaming demon crashing into the arena. "That's where the Tokyo Game Show demo ended," says Kobayashi. "But we're going to show you something they won't have seen anywhere else." The fire-coated evil thing looks a bit like a flaming T-Rex, only one that's covered in spikes and holding a burning sword that can only be described as 'unnecessarily big'.

As he stalks a frantically leaping Nero, the flames on his sword and body actually ignite the wooden buildings as he passes. They slowly catch fire, before burning to the ground in a frighteningly realistic way, with falling timbers and billowing ashes.

Despite our exclusive access, it's obvious that the developers are keeping

many of the game's features a secret for now. There's Nero's mysterious sword, the Red Queen, for example. It's fitted with a Speed Throttle – a skill that's activated with the shoulder buttons in a way that mimics the revving of a motorbike. We're not exactly sure what form these actions will take (flaming weapons were mentioned), but we'd bet our behinds that it involves the manipulation of time in some way. We're also positive that the Devil Bringer will turn out to be far more than just a long-distance grabbing device by the time it's fully powered up. Early concept art

seems to hint that Nero can transform into a completely monstrous form, similar to Dante's Devil Trigger.

So will the finished game, like its PS2 predecessors, be a series of boxed-off areas tied to a linear story, or will it try to expand the gameplay? There's currently no word either way. But, while the creature-battering action we've seen may suggest it's not one of PS3's most ambitious titles, it's certain to be one of the most refined and visually impressive. And with the mystery of a new leading man, sporting unknown powers and skills, it's a fight we can't wait to start.



Next
Wave

Original Concept Format PS3 ETA 2007 Pub Sony Dev Rhino Studios

Afrika

△ Lions ○ Rhinos ⊗ Human □ Snap

A change of pace: no guns, robots, or zombie ninjas – just miles of African savannah and majestic herds of rhinos, hyenas and hippos.

The graphics are gorgeous and the mood is wildlife documentary. Cries for

action will only get the cameras clicking though as the indications from Rhino Studios are that you're a photographer trying to bag the money shot. You'll stalk big game animals around their watering holes or on the prowl. You don't get to kill

anything, but there *will* be death as scenes of a cheetah leaping towards a frightened gazelle clearly suggest. Poke your zoom lens too closely into a lion's business and no doubt you'll meet the same grisly fate.



Did you know?

Chameleons can accelerate faster than an SLR McLaren.
A giraffe's heart has to generate double the normal blood pressure for an animal of equivalent weight to pump blood into its head against gravity.
Hippos secrete their own natural sunscreen, a red-coloured goo, sometimes known as 'blood sweat'.
During a bout of mating, lions typically do the dirty deed anywhere between 20 and 40 times a day.



Walk with the animals It's a beautiful day on the plains



Animals move with incredible realism, right down to elephants flapping their trunks and hippo ear-wiggling.



Rhino Studios refuses to confirm whether you'll be able to goad hyenas into attacking you with insistent parps of your jeep's horn. Surely it'd make for a dramatic photo opportunity...



Next
Wave



The Next Big Thing **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2007 **Pub** LucasArts **Dev** LucasArts

Star Wars Next Gen

Ⓐ Jedi Ⓒ Force ⊗ Lightsabers Ⓚ Cool

A single Sith fries a group of the Empire's finest stormtroopers with Force lightning. Moments later, he uses the Force to smash a stormtrooper to a pulp against a pillar. Finally, he launches the shattered body as a projectile, blowing a dive-bombing TIE fighter out of the sky. Elsewhere, a female Jedi stabs a lightsaber into the ground, releasing a Force wave that devastates everything around her.

That's just a brief taste of the 'Force Unleashed', the developer's name for their vision for Star Wars on PS3. All they've revealed so far has been concept work that shows their intentions for the title, nobody has seen proof positive in-game footage as yet. Still, the Jedi and Sith fighting stormtroopers suggests the game will follow on from Episode III, with Darth Vader hunting down survivors of the great Jedi purge.

▲ LucasArts call this 'pre-visualisation' artwork - it's a rough sketch that guides the dev team's work.

Where The Hell Is? Ratchet & Clank

The comedy double act will return on PS3

Proving that PS3 isn't all about glistening car bonnets and hyper-realistic war, Insomniac Games tail-ended a recent showing of Resistance: Fall Of Man with a brief look at Ratchet on PS3. While the big-eared hero and his robot pal weren't visible, we

did see a Fifth Element-style Metropolis City, full of sky cars and impossibly tall buildings.

The demo really showed off the grand scale we can expect from PS3 games, now we just need some equally large guns.

■ Early footage of Ratchet & Clank on PS3 shows a bustling, gleaming enormo-city.



■ Free Radical also created the superb TimeSplitters series and Second Sight.

The Force kicks ass Here's how...



A group of stormtroopers confronts what appears to be a Jedi surrounded by debris.



With a waft of the warrior's hands the troopers float helplessly into the air.



A burst of Force lightning reveals that this warrior is not a noble Jedi, but an evil Sith.



Whatever his allegiance, though, the assault continues until all the troopers are fried.

Head-To-Head

Coded Arms Vs Turok

Enemies



You're actually fighting in cyberspace, using viruses and a downloaded arsenal. Your defeated electronic enemies evaporate in a haze of corrupted programming code.



You've got two major problems: firstly, the war criminal you've come to arrest and secondly, genetically modified dinosaurs who will attack anything – even other dinosaurs.

Winner: Turok's show-stopping dinos.

Big guns



Just because you're in cyberspace doesn't mean things won't blow up. On top of the small arms, you can also look forward to mounted weaponry on land and air vehicles.



Turok's blasters mess up soldiers, dinos, and even trees. You can also resort to a knife attack which switches the view from FPS to third-person so you can admire the kill.

Winner: Turok's guns are clearly bigger and bangier.

Comrades



Other fighters might appear alongside, but you're really on your own in this one – unless you choose the four-player campaign co-op or 16-player online deathmatches.



You're not the only survivor of the crash, so at times you'll have help, but there's no squad order system to slow the pace. You can also use people as bait for the dinosaurs.

Winner: Coded Arms' multiplayer options take the bloodied, fractured biscuit.

Genre: PS3 Xbox360 Format: PS3 ETA: 2007 Pub: Ubisoft Dev: Free Radical

Haze

⊕ Guns ⊖ Drugs ⊗ Conspiracy ⊕ Jungle

An early taste of developer Free Radical's sci-fi shooter leaves plenty of unanswered questions. Our first teasing experience pitches us into the jungle, fighting a morally righteous war against guerillas. But the scene ends with one of our squad gunning down an unarmed resistance fighter in cold blood. At that point the screen mysteriously flashes red and displays an error message as the body disappears before your eyes. Eh?

You play as Sgt. Jake Carpenter and work for Mantel Corp, whose interests run from the media, to pharmaceuticals, to private military companies. You've been sent in to clean up a guerilla insurgency, fuelled by a mysterious combat enhancing drug called Nectar that boosts your abilities. Obvious twist? The drug controls your mind and you're actually a bad guy. However, we suspect the truth will be far more complicated than that.





Next
Wave

PlayStation Icon **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2007 **Pub** Capcom **Dev** In-house

Resident Evil 5

△ Who ○ We ⊗ Want □ Back

Here's what the world knows about Resident Evil 5: it's set somewhere hot. The heat affects your characters. And the zombies – if they *are* zombies – can sprint like Linford Christie. Everything else is up for survival-horror grabs, including the identities of the supporting cast. So, who's favourite to make a return?

Leon S Kennedy

First appearance Resident Evil 2

Also Resident Evil 4

Finest moment Killing a giant fish with a pistol and some harpoons.

Why the world needs him After first hitting the Resi scene as a rookie cop thrown into the end-of-the-world chaos of Resi 2, Leon put the next few years to good use – he turns up in part four as a confident, well-dressed, Spaniard-suplexing machine. It's unlikely that he'll appear – Resi games have a tradition of giving their characters a break between games – but surely a cameo isn't out of the question?

How likely 20%

Jill Valentine

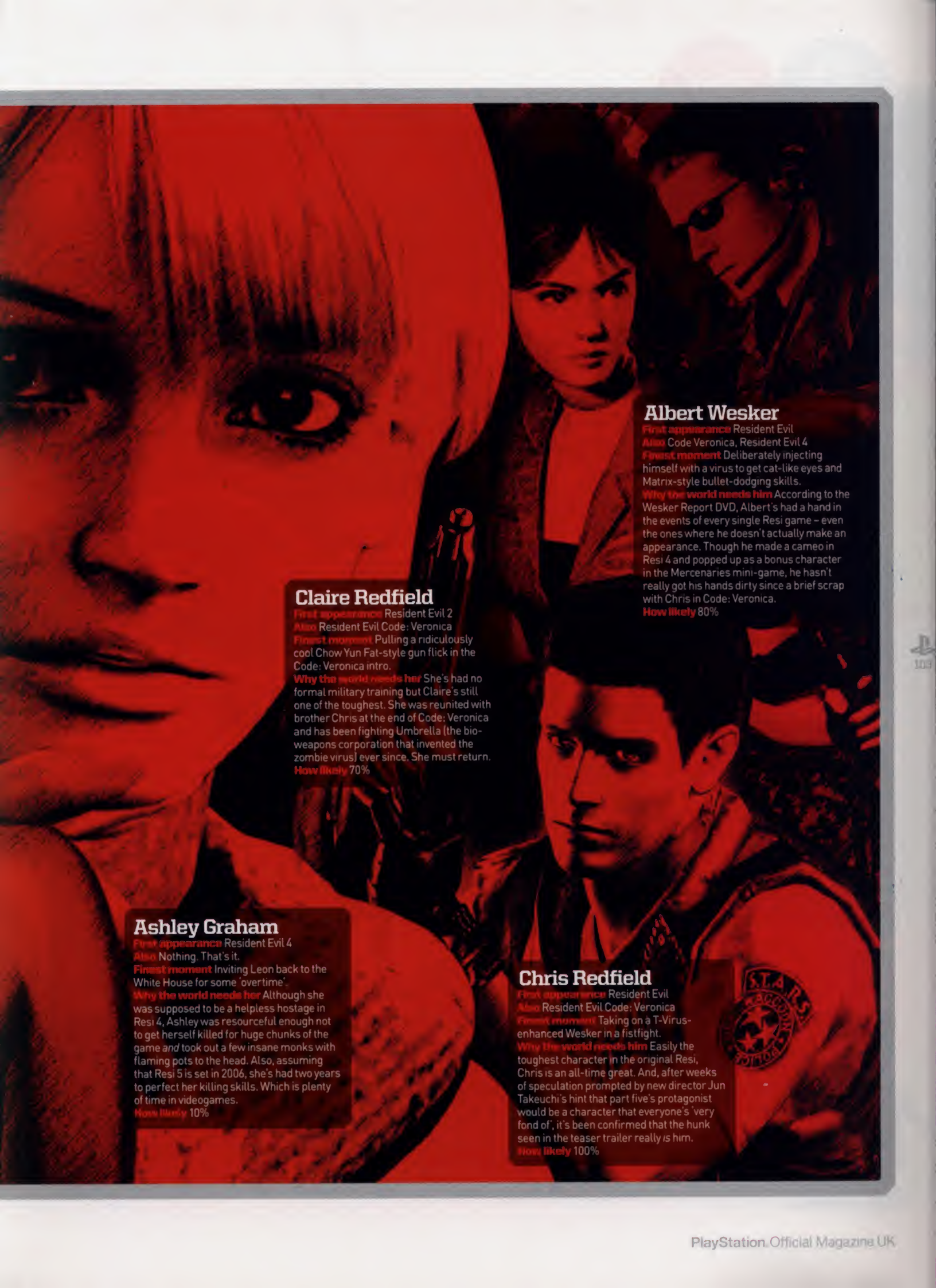
First appearance Resident Evil

Also Resident Evil 3, Resident Evil: Apocalypse, Marvel Vs Capcom 2

Finest moment Taking out the Tyrant in the original Resident Evil.

Why the world needs her She's a trooper. Since Resi 1 she's switched from beret 'n' boots to mascara 'n' miniskirts, and remains a perfect ten on the scale of girls-we're-scared-of-but-still-fancy.

How likely 50%



Claire Redfield

First appearance Resident Evil 2

Also Resident Evil Code: Veronica

Finest moment Pulling a ridiculously cool Chow Yun Fat-style gun flick in the Code: Veronica intro.

Why the world needs her She's had no formal military training but Claire's still one of the toughest. She was reunited with brother Chris at the end of Code: Veronica and has been fighting Umbrella (the bio-weapons corporation that invented the zombie virus) ever since. She must return.

How likely 70%

Ashley Graham

First appearance Resident Evil 4

Also Nothing. That's it.

Finest moment Inviting Leon back to the White House for some 'overtime'.

Why the world needs her Although she was supposed to be a helpless hostage in Resi 4, Ashley was resourceful enough not to get herself killed for huge chunks of the game and took out a few insane monks with flaming pots to the head. Also, assuming that Resi 5 is set in 2006, she's had two years to perfect her killing skills. Which is plenty of time in videogames.

How likely 10%

Albert Wesker

First appearance Resident Evil

Also Code Veronica, Resident Evil 4

Finest moment Deliberately injecting himself with a virus to get cat-like eyes and Matrix-style bullet-dodging skills.

Why the world needs him According to the Wesker Report DVD, Albert's had a hand in the events of every single Resi game – even the ones where he doesn't actually make an appearance. Though he made a cameo in Resi 4 and popped up as a bonus character in the Mercenaries mini-game, he hasn't really got his hands dirty since a brief scrap with Chris in Code: Veronica.

How likely 80%

Chris Redfield

First appearance Resident Evil

Also Resident Evil Code: Veronica

Finest moment Taking on a T-Virus-enhanced Wesker in a fistfight.

Why the world needs him Easily the toughest character in the original Resi, Chris is an all-time great. And, after weeks of speculation prompted by new director Jun Takeuchi's hint that part five's protagonist would be a character that everyone's 'very fond of', it's been confirmed that the hunk seen in the teaser trailer really is him.

How likely 100%



Next
Wave



The Game's A Bit Special! Format: PS3 ETA Spring 2007 Pub: TBC Dev: Tecmo

Ninja Gaiden Sigma

△ Deadly ○ Dismember ⊗ Diamond hard ◻ Pink ribbon

Brilliant! Sony has created a console that's powerful enough to cure world famine and one of its best-looking games is a two-year-old Xbox title. Hardly the brave new world of the bleeding edge, is it?

Except Ninja Gaiden is one of the best action games of all time and PS3 is set to deliver the definitive version, with glorious in-game visuals and a kimono bulging with new features (see below).

In Ryu Hayabusa the game has a lead character who combines the destructive capabilities of Devil May Cry's Dante with the agile acrobatics of the Prince of

Persia. He's a ninja who can run along walls, walk on water, rappel down power lines and slice his way through waves of increasingly tough enemies, beheading and dismembering from every angle.

This is hardcore

Spanning traditional Japanese villages and sci-fi airships, the action is unrelenting. It's got spider-ninjas, zombie dragons, cyber soldiers, nunchaku, shuriken and super-powered ninpo attacks. There's none of this save-point-just-before-a-boss business and even the lowliest footman is capable of



chewing up your health bar, if you don't make use of Ryu's ninja reflexes to dodge, block and tumble out of reach.

The game's creator, Tomonobu Itagaki begrudgingly compromised with an easier difficulty level in Ninja Gaiden Black, but he made gamers pay for it with dishonour. Ninja Dog level was more merciful but you were forced to face the relentless hordes with a pink ribbon tied around Ryu's arm.

Even sporting a fetching ribbon, Ninja Gaiden Sigma remains a supremely challenging alternative to Devil May Cry 4 – if you've got the stomach for it.



New to PS3 Ninja Gaiden Sigma will boast a string of impressive new features

Graphics

Sigma will take full advantage of the PS3's enhanced graphical capabilities with real-time visuals that are virtually indistinguishable from the glorious pre-rendered cut-scenes of the Xbox games. And, of course, Xbox never went up to high-definition 1080p

Rachel

The buxom, war-hammer-wielding fiend hunter Rachel will be a playable character. Expect Rachel's story path to reveal more about her quest for her sister's redemption.



Gamov

Already home to the hardest bosses in Christendom, Sigma will add to your woes with a showdown against Gamov. The nefarious Head of the Vigor Empire Internal Affairs Agency (and ally of Ryu's nemesis), Gamov only appeared in cut-scene cameos in the original Gaiden.

Special attack soldiers

The game's rank and file goons are being beefed up. Assaultants were originally available in three flavours (standard, grenade-lobbing and riot-shield-equipped), but some soldiers will now come mounted on motorbikes. Until Ryu destroys them all, that is.



Our hero Lenard must fight an age-old evil that (shock!) may be returning to the world.

The Next... Dragon Quest Format PS3 ETA 2007 Pub Sony Dev Level-5

White Knight Story

△ Epic ○ Stunning ⊗ Engaging □ Quest

Even if you've never played a Level-5 RPG before – Dark Chronicle, say, or this year's Dragon Quest – you should still get excited about White Knight Story. Why? Because Level-5's ability to transport players into exquisite fantasy worlds and stir their emotions with rich, believable characters is second to none.

True to form, the developer's first effort on PS3 looks set to deliver. The star is Lenard who discovers an ancient artefact that once belonged to a hero known as the White Knight. Lenard learns that the relic can transform him into the warrior and, along with love interest Yulie and veteran Erudoa, sets

out to discover more about the Knight and an ancient evil set to rise again.

Level-5 is making a lot of noise about PS3, particularly drawing attention to the increase in scale it brings to their game. They've exploited its power to breathtaking effect with characters that are alive with detail roaming through beautiful environments.

The turn-based battles of old are replaced by a more fluid system that combines real-time combat with a 'palette' of pre-selected moves. The main point being that it looks fantastic as swords smash into shields and warriors buckle under impact.

Dev talk

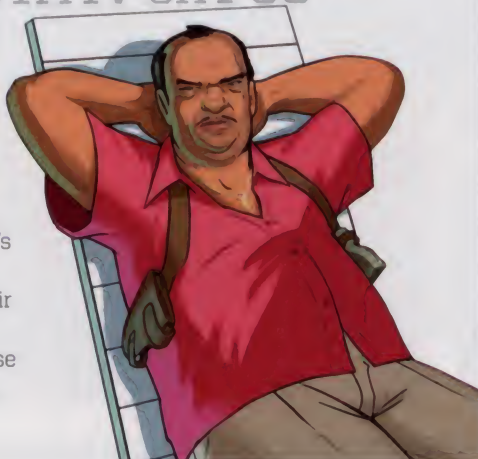


"We want to have a big title that surpasses the volume of the RPGs that we've made in the past."
Akihiro Hino
Director/Producer

Where The Hell Is? GTA IV on PS3

Work is underway at Rockstar North in Dundee

The internet's fake picture factory may be operating at full speed, but details about Rockstar's next GTA remain scant. Publically Rockstar has said it will run on the RAGE engine used in its recent Table Tennis game and that the cast list includes Laslow Jones – the DJ who's appeared in every Grand Theft Auto so far. Privately, our contacts have seen a prototype GTA IV in action and their pupils dilate with happy madness every time they mention it. Unusually, Rockstar has confirmed the release date as 16 Oct, 2007 and says extra game zones will be made available on the PlayStation network, to be downloaded and bolted on to the main game world.



Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Derek Littlewood Project Lead, Haze, Free Radical Design

Team Ico's new project

Okay, so technically nothing's been announced, but you just know they're working on something stunning, ethereal and completely unlike anything you've ever played before.

Assassin's Creed



The weakness of many next-gen games is the fact that they're populated by stilted, robotic-looking characters. Assassin's Creed realises the importance of characters who look and move like humans. The fluid movement of the main character is probably the best in-game animation I've ever seen.

Devil May Cry 4

It's reassuring to know that in an age of emotion-laden storylines and near photo-realistic graphics, Capcom still believes in the appeal of a spiky-haired bloke with a big sword. And rock soundtracks.





Next
Wave



Quick pitch

Never ending story

An epic tale wrapped around hours of fighting, crossed lovers and tyrannical villains.

Mythical metropolis

Magic and machines collide in a gleaming techno city populated by people and monsters.

Eat fireballs

Save the world with turn-based battles and extravagant, eye-popping special attacks.

Final Fantasy XIII

△ Cut-scenes ○ Gunswords ⊗ Girls ☐ Sofas

You know Final Fantasy, right? Random turned-based battles sandwiched between lavishly rendered CG sequences. Spiky-haired kid saves the world. Enormous chickens... Or maybe not. The 13th game in the hugely popular RPG series is poised to be a major reinvention. It's set in a high-tech, futuristic cityscape with in-game visuals that are nigh on indistinguishable from the pre-rendered cut-scenes Square Enix is famous for. The step up in power is due to the 'White Engine', Square's next-gen graphics tech. FFXIII

was originally planned for PS2, but development shifted to PS3 once the team found out how powerful it was.

The game features an unnamed girl who wields a sword/gun hybrid, and the good news for anyone who doesn't like waiting in line to be punched in the face is that the battles occur in real-time. They also feature a sexy slow-motion effect called Overclock (similar to the Limit Break and Trance modes of earlier games). Oh, and there's talk of online features plus Sixaxis motion-sensitivity to add to the game's already heady allure.

Spin-off games



Final Fantasy XIII is just the first in a series of games that will appear under the banner title. Fabula Nova Crystallis FFXIII games will share a common background, but won't all conform to FFX's classic RPG formula. Final Fantasy Versus XIII will be the second installment and is an action-based adventure directed by Tetsuya Nomura of Kingdom Hearts fame. FF Agito XIII will follow (Agito is Latin for 'move forward') and a fourth title, Final Fantasy Haecceitas XIII, was trademarked on 1 May 2006. Fabula Nova Crystallis translates as 'New Tale Of The Crystal' and Square Enix claims it could run over ten years.



▲ Square reckons the entire FFXIII series will be a 100 billion yen (£450 million) project.



▲ According to director Motomu Toriyama, this new character is "like a female version of Cloud", who was the spiky-haired star of mega-selling FFXVII.



Next
Wave

Dev talk



"This is the game we've always wanted to create."
Reid Schneider
Senior Producer

Guest PS3 Hope **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2007 **Pub** Electronic Arts **Dev** Electronic Arts Montreal

Army Of Two

Ⓐ Bloody ☉ Thuddy ✕ Buddy ☐ Study

This one feels like something very new. It's like a co-op mode blown up into an entire third person action game. Everything is designed around two mercenary heroes, Tyson Rios and Elliot Salem, working together to kick ass in global trouble spots that are quite popular on the news.

So how does the power of two work? While Rios insanely drives a speedboat at an aircraft carrier, Salem can snipe at the gunners on deck. While Salem abseils straight through a window in a surprise attack, Rios stands on the rooftop, taking his buddy's weight on the rope. Or the other way around. The pair can even lock

their bullet-proof armour back to back, making them nigh on invulnerable.

You'll be able to save your bestest buddy, too. Maybe you'll steal a chopper from a sinking aircraft carrier while your mate holds the enemy at bay; the pilot then plucks the gunner to safety. And if it goes wrong, you can resuscitate the big lug via a rhythm-based CPR mini-game.

The AI plays the other character when you're on your tod. EA claims that voice recognition will be possible using a headset, but the AI will remain independent. Screw up and your comrade will refuse orders, insult you, and even flip you the bird. We'll see.



☑ Want to become a public enemy or a local hero? It's up to you.



Original Concept **Format** PS3 **ETA** December 2008 **Pub** TBC **Dev** Frontier Developments

The Outsider

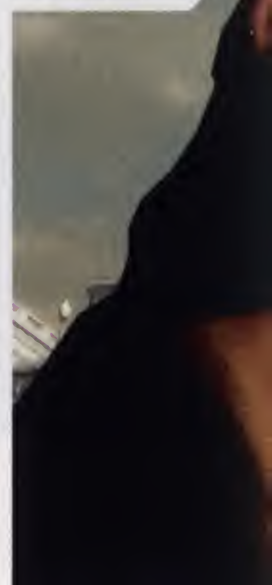
Ⓐ Freeform ☉ Conspiracy ✕ Techno ☐ Payback

The Outsider is described as a 'techno thriller', which is true of both storyline and intent. Washington intrigue may be familiar ground – for movie goers at least – but developer Frontier is in fresh territory when it comes to storytelling and freedom.

As CIA 'terrorist handler' John Jameson, you're framed when Air Force One is blown up. You can use your shady contacts for help, but they have agendas of their own. Choose revenge and their trust in you will grow, but the public will hate you. Try to clear your name and the public will support you, but your tormentors will up the pressure.

So, moral relativity rules, and The Outsider's scenarios will supposedly alter to mirror your choices. An example: a terrorist has a hostage and is demanding evidence that you need to help your cause. A media chopper has you on live TV and a SWAT team is en route. Do you run and doom the hostage? Shoot but risk his life? Hand over the evidence but hurt your case, or wait for the cops and risk arrest? The clock's ticking...

☑ Terrorists and the CIA will hunt you as you search for the truth.



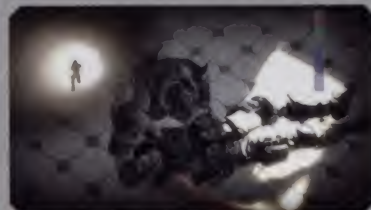
Key ingredients of Army Of Two



1 Watching your buddy's back.



2 Original co-op play with your human or AI partner.



3 Lots of 'help me, pal' rescues.



4 Stunning set-pieces.



Clive Barker's influence is rife in Jericho's twisted ghoul.



Original Concept: Format PS3 ETA July 2007 Pub Codemasters Dev Alchemic Productions

Clive Barker's Jericho

△ Undead ○ Hell Raising ⊗ Telepathic □ Screams

Our experience of this first-person horror shooter opens with a glimpse of an undead knight (see pic above). He's restrained by manacles from the ceiling and floor, as human voices interrogate him. His response is to laugh, and inform his captors that they're all going to die. Laser sights start to dance over his face as he tears free from his chains and leaps towards the camera. The screen goes dark and there's a cacophony of screaming, gunfire and ripping noises. It's that sort of game...

The voices belong to a Special Ops outfit called Jericho Team, sent to investigate the strange reappearance of a

lost city called Al Khali. Aside from toting hi-tech weaponry, each team member is also an authority on paranormal activity. Oh, and did we mention they all have different psychic abilities? Team leader Ross, for example, is a telepath who communicates with his squad mates by speaking directly into their brains. Other skills include pyrokinesis, exorcism and premonition. You can choose to play as any character, although certain situations will require specific powers. Best of all, the story is penned by horror maestro Clive Barker, so it promises to be a cut-above the normal monster-filled gore when it comes to scares.

Rip-off Jericho's been on the rob



Magic
The Lord Of The Rings
Magical powers have been hot since Gandalf showed the world his wand. Facing ultimate evil, you'll wield spells as well as guns.

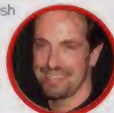


Time travel
TimeSplitters
The walled city of Al Khali contains enemies and weaponry from ever more distant periods in history.



Books Clive Barker

Barker has huge experience in crafting nightmarish tales such as Hellraiser – expect an unusually effective story.



Multiple paths
Deus Ex
Pioneered the now near-mandatory non-linear approach.



Special forces

SOCOM US Navy SEALs
Who'd confront the Devil without a crack special forces squad? Communists...



Next
Wave

1

Under attack

Your squad is taking sniper fire from a building across the street. Your comrades head for cover while you prepare to wrinkle him out.

2

Bring the house down

Destructible scenery enables you to knock a hole in anything. Sniper in the house? No more house, no more problem.

3

Hole in one

Your grenade launcher blows out the second storey. Nudge the next shot up a floor to clean the sniper out of his brick nest.

The Next: **SOCOM** Format PS3 ETA 2007 Pub Electronic Arts Dev DICE

Battlefield Bad Company

△ Online ○ War ⊗ Mass □ Destruction

Leaping in and out of tanks and helicopters; charging about in squads or on lone man rampages, Battlefield has pretty much perfected the madness-of-war online formula. The series is enormously popular on PC, where up to 64 players per firefight swarm across its huge, toy-strewn playgrounds, and it's already made a superb debut on PS2 in the guise of Modern Combat. So we have high hopes for Bad Company, especially now we know it's harnessing PS3's power for maximum destruction.

Bad Company takes destructible terrain to a level that was impossible before PS3. Point a rocket launcher at a building then laugh like a maniac as the missile punches a hole straight through the masonry. There's an enemy in cover around the corner? A shower of rubble will sort him out. You want to snipe from a building but can't get a good angle down the street. Drill your own hole through the wall. The destructible terrain

system is like do-it-yourself level design in reverse. You don't so much build it as take the place apart brick by brick. As senior producer, Karl Magnus Troedsson, explains: "It will definitely affect a lot of the second-to-second tactics. The destruction will give new opportunities for players to play in their own creative way, no longer bound by the same old static meshes and level design. But it won't be forced – we see it more as another opportunity to get the upper hand on your enemies!"

Grunt for action

DICE believes it can up the ante in the single-player mode too. Bad Company will feature story-led missions that shove the humble grunt into the spotlight. "We don't want to create another so-called 'epic' where verbally challenged one-man armies save the world from super villains or hordes of evil aliens," reckons Troedsson. "We'd rather tell a humorous and modern war story about ordinary

guys up to no good in the army, waging a war for their own personal ambitions instead of following orders."

So they won't be a clichéd band of Jake Steels, Karl Tempests and Jack Knifes? "Good question!" says Troedsson. "Movie or game heroes seem to have simple names that go well with their surname. However, since our squad consists of anti-heroes and military washouts you can expect some different names."

But whatever names the ragtag members of Bad Company go by, they won't be following *your* orders either. "They'll follow you around, give you hints, help in a firefight and occasionally just leave you hanging. Their personalities push their actions, so it isn't about managing a squad." Though the story won't be playable co-op, Troedsson admits it "could be an idea for later additions", hinting at downloadable content to follow. And there'll certainly be a demo you can download for free. Do so. You'll be in good company.

Can't
wait?
Play
these

PlayStation 2

CALL OF DUTY 3



Call Of Duty 3

(PS2, on sale now)

Get your fill of mind-blowing warfare with the PS2 version of this excellent WW2 series. Available now.

PlayStation 2



SOCOM 3: US Navy SEALs

(PS2, on sale now)

Not only does SOCOM provide quality top-down based shooting, but it's hugely popular online.

Next Wave Game Round-Up

There's plenty more to look forward to in 2007



Eight Days

ETA 2007 Pub Sony Dev Sony Studios London

A 'who's counting the bullets'-style shooter, mixing third-person action and car chase shoot-outs. Plenty of games have fast cars, big guns, explosions and surly-looking men, but few whip up the essential videogame elements into such a level of frenzy.



The Getaway

ETA 2007 Pub Sony Dev Sony Studios London

Break the law as a cockney gangster or uphold it as a copper when gang warfare erupts in this crime adventure set in a stunning, near photo-realistic London. Recent shots suggest that there may also be another – more continental – location for you to visit.



Def Jam: Icon

ETA 2007 Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Chicago

The latest instalment of the urban fighter brings music to the top of the mix by linking a fighter's attacks to the beat of the soundtrack. You can also upload your own tunes to find out what kind of effect that has on your helpless victims. A violent one, we guess.



Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

ETA 2007 Pub TBA Dev Pandemic Studios

More soldier-for-hire action as the destruct-o-thon relocates from Korea to the oil fields of Venezuela. This time there's a two-player co-op and the ability to recruit your own private army.



Killzone

ETA 2007 Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla Games

The flagship future shooter that fuses the horror of Saving Private Ryan with the sci-fi pyrotechnics of Starship Troopers. The firefights we've seen are a chaos of burning men, raining missiles and the black clouds of war.



Rogue Warrior

ETA 2007 Pub Bethesda Softworks Dev Zombie

Real life ex-Navy SEAL, 'Demo' Dick Marcinko lends his throat-slitting, booby-trap-setting expertise to this free-roaming, squad-based slot-'em-up. It's being supervised by Bethesda Softworks, the Oblivion guys.

There's more...

Frontlines: Fuel Of War is a squad-based shooter that makes you fight with soldiers and vehicles as you battle to control the world's dwindling oil reserves. Original EA's **Medal Of Honor: Airborne** promises a less linear experience than previous instalments of the WW2 shooter. Now you begin each level by choosing from multiple landing zones and parachuting into wide open, Nazi-filled levels. There's more FPS conflict on the way with Codemasters' remake of **Fall Of Liberty**. In an alternate version of WW2, where Winston Churchill dies and Nazis take over the world, the game's events unfold in a German-occupied USA. There's motorised carnage in **Stuntman 2** from THQ, where the emphasis is on performing for the camera, pulling Hollywood stunt sequences, rather than racing. On more of a crime theme, Rockstar is publishing the 1940s private eye thriller **L.A. Noire** currently being developed by Team Bondi. Leaving reality far behind, **The Lord Of The Rings: The White Council** is EA's attempt to take the Tolkien franchise into Oblivion's free-roaming territory. While on the sequel front, Hideo Kojima has promised a third instalment of robot battler **Zone Of The Enders** and Sony has announced a third episode of survival horror **Forbidden Siren**. The series' sightjacking ability, enabling you to 'tune in' to what others see, sounds like a perfect use for Sixaxis' motion control.

Skate

ETA 2007 Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Black Box

New boy on the half-pipe Danny Way challenges Tony Hawk's supremacy with a skateboarding game created by real skaters. There's a new control system that uses the Sixaxis pad to pull tricks, which will help you feel through every kick-flip and land every aerial. There's also a vast, open city, providing plenty of ramps, rails and jumps to practise those moves on.



▲ Skate uses the Sixaxis pad to give you a real feeling of skating in an interactive city.

Back to the future

PS2 is still kicking hard with plenty of hot games for 2007

With the launch of PS3 imminent, it's tempting to assume that the 120 million PlayStation 2s out there are set for a long lie-down in the attic. But that's a wild misconception – the beautiful black-hearted beast has plenty of life in it yet. This Christmas sees a great line-up of games pumping new fun into its chips, and there are a host of big-name titles preparing to keep it healthy through 2007, too. Don't believe us? Read on...

feature PS2
The future



PlayStation 2 is a Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. trademark.

Play Now

The best PS2 games to get between now and Christmas

Scarface: The World Is Yours

Pub Vivendi Dev Radical Out Now

Most movie tie-ins should come with a 'Warning: soulless cash-in' sticker on the packaging, so the fact that the official Scarface game is actually pretty good is one of this year's biggest surprises. Bringing Tony Montana back to life (using the voice of a convincing Al Pacino soundalike) has proven to be a masterstroke. He's unleashed on Miami in a free-roaming GTA adventure with little more than a cocked piece, a swearie tongue and more balls. Literally. Every time Tony empties lead into a bad guy, points are added to his 'Balls meter'. Filling this on-screen device triggers 'Blind Rage' mode, where Montana becomes coke-raged and temporarily invincible as he volleys off bullets and dirty words in equal measure. Like the decision to resurrect the ice cool movie anti-hero, it's genius.



Pro Evolution Soccer 6

Pub Konami Dev Konami Out Now

It's slow, methodical build-up play all the way in this year's football superstar – but that's not to say it's lost its touch. Choose FIFA 07 if you want the more accessible game full of licensed teams and players, but choose PES6 if you want the purist's choice that still feels as close to the real thing as it's possible to get using a joypad.



Just Cause

Pub Eidos Dev Avalanche Out Now

Say hello to Rico, CIA agent and Just Cause's lead character. His mission is to overthrow a fictional South American dictatorship, and there's a vast island to explore along the way. Not to mention tanks, 'copters and boats to be stolen, and a stack of villages to be freed from government oppression via a series of brutal and bloody gunfights. You're looking at a huge free-roaming adventure with extra parachutes – and that marriage is just as blissful as it sounds.



Call Of Duty 3

Pub Activision Dev Treyarch Out Now

It's only a year since Call Of Duty 2 arrived on the scene, yet the next instalment in this acclaimed series of WW2 shooters deploys another troop of innovations. Taking place during the Normandy breakout campaign of 1944, new 'Battle Action' sequences enable you to participate in hand-to-hand combat by mashing the trigger buttons, while the ability to order tank strikes upon unsuspecting enemy strongholds sounds ace. As for 24-way online play - we're already wearing a Brodie helmet around the house in anticipation.



Guitar Hero II

Pub Activision Dev Harmonix Out December

RedOctane's Guitar Hero provided one of the most original gaming experiences of the past decade on any console. With 40 licensed songs - including Guns 'N Roses' immortal Sweet Child O' Mine to bang out on the included rock guitar controller - this sequel promises even more evenings locked indoors while your pals are down the pub.



Need For Speed Carbon

Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Black Box Out Now

Wickedly dangerous Canyon Duels are guaranteed to spin your wheels as soon as you clap eyes on the latest Need For Speed, but plenty else has changed too. Chief improvement is the drive to build up a crew as you progress - blockers to shunt other cars off the road, scouts to find shortcuts and drafters to drive dead ahead of you so you can ride their slipstream. It all adds an intriguing strategic twist to the demon racing.



Canis Canem Edit

Pub Rockstar Dev Rockstar Vancouver Out Now

Formerly known as Bully, this GTA-in-school pitches you into Bullworth Academy as 15-year-old Jimmy Hopkins. The only way to survive (the title is latin for 'dog eat dog') is by completing numerous missions for pupils and teachers alike - sabotaging a rival science project or protecting a terrorised geek, for example - while staying out of trouble by making sure you don't miss too many classes.



Other contenders for your Christmas list



WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007 (THQ)

SmackDown Vs Raw 2006 was a nigh-on perfect grap game, and with an even deeper Season mode this is a grand slam follow-up.



Splinter Cell Double Agent (Ubisoft)

Special agent Sam Fisher deploys stealth moves and secret gadgets to wreck a terrorist cell from the inside.



Superman Returns (Electronic Arts)

Protect Metropolis as the Man Of Steel. Your success is measured by the people you save. Let too many die and it's game over.



Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (Konami)

A special edition of the game that includes a new camera, online multiplayer and a three-hour movie made from all the cut-scenes.



The Sopranos: Road To Respect (THQ)

Play as new Mafioso Joey, working for boss Tony Soprano as a mob war breaks out.

Play 2007

PS2 has plenty of new games to look forward to in the New Year. Here's our pick of the best so far announced



God Of War II

Pub Sony **Dev** Sony Santa Monica **Out** January

Think Clash Of The Titans meets The Matrix and you've got God Of War II – the most exciting and violent action-adventure due to hit PS2 next year. Kratos (the Blade Of Chaos-wielding warrior) is thrown back to Earth to fight mythical gods and monsters using a superb control system that lets you showboat big time. You can flip enemies up into the air, break them over your knee and even pull out the Cyclops' eye then swallow it like a pickled shallot. Throw in flying on winged horse Pegasus while battling Griffins and we're in for a stormer.

Lost

Pub Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal **Out** Summer

Play as the survivors of the crashed Oceanic Air flight 815 as they struggle to survive on a tropical island. Battle the violent 'Others', explore the jungle and try to uncover the mystery behind an abandoned underground base and a mysterious button that must be pressed every 108 minutes.



Brian Lara International Cricket 2007

Pub Codemasters **Dev** Codemasters **Out** March

While the last edition of Brian Lara was marred by oversimplified gameplay and awful licensing (England's captain and star player were renamed M Vorner and A Flintaff, respectively) this instalment features all the official teams, stadiums and equipment. The gameplay has been similarly enhanced with an increased range of bowling options, more realistic ball movement (creating more accurate swing, pace and spin bowling) and a new slip catch system to test your wicketkeeping reactions.





Yakuza 2

Pub Sega Dev Sega Out Summer

Set in the organised crime-riddled red light district of Tokyo, Yakuza starred the tattooed Kazuma Kiryu as he sought out his AWOL girlfriend – and ten billion missing yen. This time around, Kiryu's fighting his way through the seedy underbelly of Osaka. Expect plenty more of the same gun-fu as you smash gangsters' heads and attempt awkward conversations with hostesses in bars.

Final Fantasy XII

Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix Out February

Despite changing story, location and characters with every instalment, the Final Fantasy series has always delivered a consistently excellent role-playing adventure. There's the epic and captivating storytelling; a lavish world to explore that's filled with magic and machines; outlandish monsters to fight, and your character's abilities to power-up. This latest episode introduces Vann, a young man caught between two warring kingdoms. Gameplay-wise we can look forward to a new fighting system that marries new action elements to the traditionally turn-based combat.



Okami

Pub Capcom Dev Clover Studio Out February

There's never been a game that casts you as a sun goddess who takes the form of a white wolf, then sets off to track down 13 spirits needed to defeat an eight-headed serpent who's currently holding her homeland captive. Until now. Okami blends action, puzzle and platform elements beneath lavish cel-shaded visuals to form an endearing and totally original gaming experience.

What else is coming?

The best of the rest

A 'best of' compilation, **Rainbow Six: Critical Hour** revisits classic missions from previous instalments of the SWAT team shooter and brings them bang up to date. As if that's not enough there are all new terrorist-baiting missions as well. Over at Activision, work is underway on two movie adaptations with a **Transformers** game to tie in with Michael Bay's upcoming 'robots in disguise' movie and a new **Spider-Man** title to coincide with the third film. **TNA iMPACT!** will provide some wrestling competition for the WWE SmackDown games. It's a more extreme fighting tournament that takes place in a six-sided ring. **SOS: The Final Escape 2** provides a break from the usual diet of violence as you struggle to escape from a flooded underground city, hampered by the constantly rising tides and the threat of hypothermia if you can't warm yourself up regularly. **Rogue Galaxy**, from the people behind the excellent Dragon Quest, is an RPG set in space, where pirates sail the cosmos in jet-propelled galleons. It follows would-be buccaneer, Jester as he explores the galaxy in search of treasure.



Medal Of Honor: Airborne

Pub Electronic Arts Dev Electronic Arts Out Autumn

Pitching you into the soggy boots of a soldier in the middle of World War 2, Airborne is all about tooth-rattling firefights versus the Nazi hordes. This time you're an American paratrooper with the ability to choose where you drop into the battle zone. It's a simple feature that opens up some tasty tactical dilemmas. Do you carefully glide onto the outskirts of an enemy stronghold and attempt to pick off opposition troops from distance? Or try to parachute directly onto an Axis soldier's head before breaking out the heavy artillery?



The Entertainer

As it enters its twilight years, the PS2 is letting its hair down and partying. Check out its range of hugely original good-time games and kit...

Dancemat

Codemasters £38.99 (with Dance Factory)

Popular in Brighton but *huge* in Japan, the idea of dancing games might seem simple – tread on coloured arrows in time to the on-screen prompts while the music backs you all the way – but games such as Dance Factory take it to a whole sweaty new level. Most dance games come with a free floppy mat (see pic), but advanced players will want a tough metal platform (try www.cobaltflux.com).



Logitech Driving Force Pro

Logitech £89.99

The ultimate PS2 steering wheel, with 900 degrees of rotation and a variable-rate spring in its break pedal. Pricey, but worth it – the hands-on-leather experience improves all PS2 driving games equally, from the twisted wreckages of Burnout to the realist-fetishism of Gran Turismo.



SingStar

Sony £39.99 (with SingStar Party)

A singing game that scores you on tunefulness? Genius. The competition appeals to gamers, the karaoke appeals to everyone else and the ever-expanding range of tunes on offer makes it an attractive alternative to crooning in a dingy pub. Party Edition's the best, so start from there.



EyeToy

Sony £29.99 (with EyeToy Play 3)

With this tiny camera your PS2 can sense your body's every move and convert that motion into on-screen control. Health freaks can wave their limbs about in front of the telly and keep fit with EyeToy: Kinetic, but for interactive laughs you can't beat Sega Superstars' Monkey Ball mini-game. Tilting your body to roll around in your own giant monkey hamster ball – brilliant.

Pink PS2

Sony £129.99

Sony has decided to relaunch the slimline PS2 in vibrant, startling pink as part of its ongoing foray into the family and, specifically, girl markets. Want more proof? How about the fact that it comes packaged with two pink controllers, a memory stick and a copy of SingStar Pop, making it perfect for a couple's night in or a group singalong come Christmas.



Buzz!

Sony £39.99 (The Music Quiz with four controllers)

Buzz! The Music Quiz is the pick of the bunch when it comes to granny-pleasingly simple gameshow-style fun. Hit the four colour-coded buttons to pick the right answer then whack the massive red one in the quickfire round – it's fierce competition, perfect for parties, and will expose any supposed music know-it-all who can't hold his own.



Guitar Hero

Activision £49.99 (game and guitar controller)

Can a PS2 rhythm action game make you a rock star? With Guitar Hero and its plastic axe controller, you'll become a rock god overnight. With 47 songs to play and a sequel featuring separate rhythm, bass and lead sections on the way, isn't it time you joined the band?

Official Multitap 2

Sony £29.99

Two-player games can be intense, but with four it's sheer insanity. In classics like the frantic shooter TimeSplitters or battle-racer Mashed you've suddenly got triple the number of people to worry about and nowhere to hide. Alternatively, if fighting's not for you, playing a season of Pro Evolution Soccer Master League with a group of friends against the computer is the way to go. Just add Multitap to turn your two joypad ports into four.

You might also want

BMB Memory Card

PS2 was launched with no internal memory for game saves and the like, so you may be needing one of these



Max Drive

Or you could go for this, a USB device that not only stores and saves files but also transfers them to your PC for storage.



Dual Shock

The official, original, insanely comfortable PS2 controller. If you're serious about multiplayer, you'll need a few



featurePSP

The future

Sony's got big plans for its handheld. As well as games, internet, music and video you'll be able to stream movies, TV or dip into media stored on your PSP's hard drive from anywhere in the world. While you're on the go, you'll be able to use PSP GPS to navigate, and PSP camera to make video phone calls. Then there's the ever-expanding range of games and plans for a downloadable library of PS1 titles. It might look small but the PSP is going to be massive.

Big future, small console

What does the new year hold for PSP?



Play Now

The best games this side of Christmas

Killzone: Liberation

Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla Out Now

This is a vicious shooter that has you fighting to repel an invading Helghan army and free captured POWs. Return fire with a great range of weapons – everything from a crossbow firing explosive bolts to a skin-melting flamethrower – and then run over the survivors in a tank. Joining the single-player game is a great co-op mode, multiplayer battles and extra downloadable levels.



TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge

Pub Codemasters Dev In-house Out December

This exclusive PSP racer is built around a World Challenge mode where you attempt to complete a mixture of races, events and challenges. Succeed and you'll be promoted to the next championship tier. There's a huge variety of tracks and cars from fixtures including the British GT Championship, and Australian V8 Supercar and German DTM events. An impressive damage system means that impacts are more than panel deep, affecting handling and performance over time. 12-player WiFi races seal the deal.



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories

Pub Rockstar Dev Rockstar Leeds Out Now

Hit the streets once again in this prequel to the best GTA in the series. This time the story follows ex-marine Vic Vance (brother of Lance from the original Vice City) as he tries to escape his trailer park life by building a ruthless criminal empire. Hundreds of missions, a fantastic soundtrack (and Phil Collins) plus brilliant multiplayer options make this essential. And, best of all, adding to new vehicles like jet skis and quad bikes, you can now take to the skies in helicopters.



Need For Speed Carbon: Own The City

Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Canada Out Now

Speed around city streets looking for rival groups to challenge with your own crew of tyre shredders. You'll need more than just driving skills to win, as races are now team based. Allies can block opponents, scout ahead for police and deploy spike strips to help you win. You can also mod your entire fleet of motors to suit the skills and tactics of your squad.



Medal Of Honor: Heroes

Pub Electronic Arts Dev EA Canada Out Now

Offering top class WW2 shootery is one thing. But Heroes is also promising 32-player strong WiFi multiplayer battles. When you're not taking on 31 opponents in massive deathmatches, there are all-new missions based on previous Medal Of Honor campaigns that will have you taking the fight to the Third Reich through France, Holland, Italy and Belgium.



WWE SmackDown Vs RAW 2007

Pub THQ Dev Yuke's Out Now

There are plenty of changes in this year's edition of the premier grappling series. There's a new match – Money In The Bank – in which players compete to reach a briefcase full of cash above a ladder. There's also the PS2's General Manager Mode making its PSP debut, enabling you to call the shots over a whole wrestling season, Football Manager-style, chasing TV ratings instead of money. Plus, watch out for a new analogue grappling system and interactive environments ripe for abuse.



Star Wars: Lethal Alliance

Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal Out December

Set between Episodes III and IV, this action adventure follows Rebel spy Rianna and her droid as they try to expose the Empire's latest secret weapon – something called a 'Death Star'. The gameplay centres on teaming up Rianna's agility with the gadget-powered abilities of her security droid Zeeo (who you order around separately). You'll also meet famous Star Wars celebs like Leia, Vader and Boba Fett.

Other contenders for your Christmas list



Ace Combat X: Skies Of Deception (Namco)

Pilot state of the art warbirds against a ruthless foe, with objectives that change depending on the strategies you use in battle.



Rainbow Six Vegas (Ubisoft)

Save hostages from sticky siege situations (while leaving a trail of terrorist dead) in a tactical shooter that casts you as two more members of the elite Rainbow SWAT team.



Brothers In Arms D-Day (Ubisoft)

A tactical WW2 shooter where you'll need to use squad tactics and cover. New weapons include mortars and machine gun nests.



Prince Of Persia: Rival Swords (Ubisoft)

A remix of the Two Thrones on PS2. Bounce the acrobatic, time-travelling prince off the walls and dispose of baddies in style.



The Sims 2: Pets (Electronic Arts)

It's like The Sims with more body hair. Feed your cat/dog/parrot, clean it, take it for a walk – it's a full time virtual care-'em-up.

Play 2007

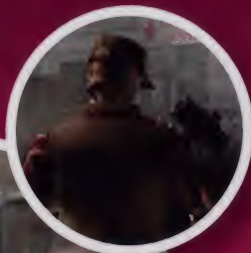
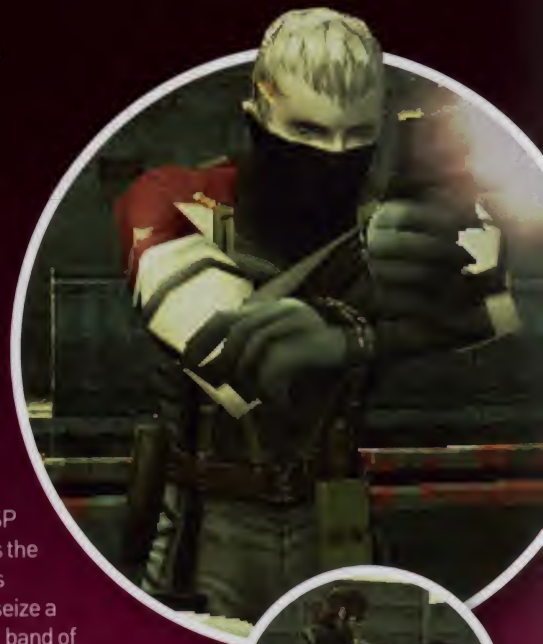
Games hitting the PSP hard next year



Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

Pub Konami **Dev** Kojima Productions **Out** March

This is the first true Metal Gear action adventure on PSP (the card-based Acl'd games don't count) and it bridges the storyline gap between MGS3 and 1. As Snake/Big Boss you're sent after your old FOXHOUND unit, when they seize a military base in South America. You'll recruit your own band of mercenaries along the way and be able to use PSP's GPS attachment to locate special characters 'hidden' at WiFi spots around the globe.



Silent Hill Origins

Pub Konami **Dev** Climax **Out** February

Find out where it all started going wrong in this prequel to the classic survival horror series. Trucker Travis Grady stops off in Silent Hill – just as it starts to slide into hell. Expect a more action-orientated adventure that uses a Resident Evil 4-style aiming system. There's also a special barricade function so you can block off doorways from pursuing gristle-monsters while you weep in the corner like a five-year-old girl.



Jeanne D'Arc

Pub Sony **Dev** Level-5 **Out** 2007

Level-5 has a habit of making RPG gold, with classics like Dragon Quest: The Journey Of The Cursed King and Dark Cloud under its belt. That's why its first role-playing game on PSP is a *big* deal. This is a turn-based RPG that loosely follows the story of Joan of Arc. Very loosely, in fact. In this version of history the French firebrand is battling demons, as well as the English, via beautifully drawn, tactical battles interspersed with movie-quality anime cut-scenes. Vive la France!



Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters

Pub Sony Dev High Impact Games Out January

Ratchet and robo-buddy Clank's holiday goes down the pan when they chase after a missing girl and unearth a lost race called the Technomites. The series returns to its platform-style roots (forget the arena-based blasting of *Deadlocked*), and gets fresh weapons, vehicles and a new customisable armour system.



Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII

Pub Square Enix Dev In-house Out 2007

An action-heavy, RPG prequel, following the events and cast from *Final Fantasy VII* – regarded by some as the greatest role-playing game ever made. This time the magic 'n' monsters adventure follows Zack, a Shinra Corporation soldier and friend of Cloud, the hero of the original *FF VII*. Cloud's love interest Aerith and enemy Sephiroth also return from the original game, along with a new Shinra soldier called Angeal.



What else is coming? The best of the rest

Lumines II is the sequel to one of the PSP greats. Fusing trippy audio-visuals with a slick control system *Lumines* drops you into a supremely addictive puzzle trance. Part Two will refine the formula and add a licensed sound track from the likes of Beck and The Black Eyed Peas. From the same stable comes **Gunpey** – another hyperactive musical puzzler based on joining lines.

Tomb Raider 10th Anniversary Edition is a remake of Lara's first ever PS1 adventure. Expect plenty of she-Indy larks as you trot across the globe in search of the Lost City Of Atlantis. Then it's time for a Total Overdose of **Chilli Con Carnage** – a spicy PSP mix of the combo-heavy TexMex shooter. The gunplay is even heavier in **Far Cry**, a shooter featuring a mutant soldier's attempt to survive a guerrilla-infested tropical island. Keep watching the skies for **Heatseeker** which promises *Burnout*-style destruction in the air, while there's more classic arcade dogfighting in **After Burner: Black Falcon**. And finally, the racing game PSP fans have waited ages for. **Gran Turismo 4 Mobile** is still on, but has been drastically delayed while the developers focus on the PS3 version (see page 86 for more).



Hot PXL

Pub Atari Dev zSlide Out February

A rapid-fire assortment of utterly insane, button-stabbing, stick-wagging mini-games. There's everything from 2D retro arcade blasts (think *Battlezone* and *Defender*) to reaction and memory tests. It's all fired at your face in brief, shouty bouts of madness and is exactly the kind of short-burst-fun that handhelds were made for.



The Elder Scrolls Travels: Oblivion

Pub Ubisoft Dev Bethesda Softworks Out 2007

This could be one of the biggest games to hit PSP next year. Customise your hero then plunder the dungeons of *Oblivion* for treasure and glory. The game promises some epic monster-slaying, culling the PS3 version's (see page 44) massive world to create a more linear beastie bash.

PSP Power-Up

The PSP is going places, and it'll show you how to get there

GPS

With the cheapest in-car systems costing a shade under £200, PSP's GPS navigation unit looks like a bargain. Currently only announced for Japan (although a European release is inevitable) the attachment is priced at 6000 yen, which is around £30. And it does a lot more than just say 'you are here', as you can see below...



Navigation

The GPS will be able to show your location on maps with functions like route-planning, and location finding for shops and facilities. What's more, the WiFi connection will ensure the details are always bang up to date.



Games

Two GPS games have already been announced: Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops uses the GPS to 'find' special characters, and there's an Everybody's Golf spin-off which provides maps and details for real-world golf courses.



Stargazing

Homestar Portable from Sega will use GPS to locate where you are in the world and then display an image of what you should be seeing in the night sky. It'll also help you locate and name any constellations that are visible.



Camera

PSP's digital camera will take 1.3megapixel pictures at a maximum resolution of 640x480pixels (the average mobile phone takes 2megapixel pics). It'll also record 15 seconds of video. The plan is to use WiFi to swap pictures and videos with other PSPs or your PS3.

Pictures

Chotto Shot is a simple image manipulation program that lets you edit photos and videos before sending them as messages to friends.

Communication

Sony has confirmed that video (and voice) communication will be possible using the camera and WiFi, turning your PSP into a video phone.

Digital distribution

The Sony vision is that you'll be able to access all kinds of entertainment on your PSP from your location anywhere in the world. Picture an online PlayStation store bulging with PS1 games, music, movie clips and trailers. You download content to your PS3 which then links directly to PSP through WiFi. So you can access and enjoy everything stored on your PS3 from your handheld, wherever you go.

LocationFree

It's already available to buy in the UK for £230 but you might not have heard of this little gadget yet. Simply connect your TV set to the LocationFree Base Station (and a PC or Mac) and you can beam your favourite programmes onto your PSP via the WiFi connection. It works anywhere. Even on the other side of the world.

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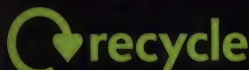
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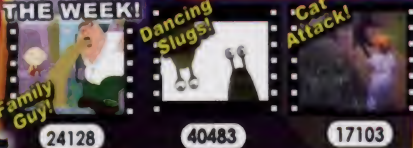
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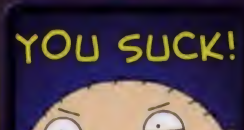
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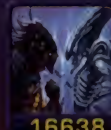
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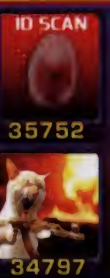
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